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CHATSWORTH;

OR,

THE ROMANCE OF A WEEK.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

CHATSWORTH;

OR,

THE ROMANCE OF A WEEK.

EDITED BY THE

AUTHOR OF "TREMAINE," "DE VERE," &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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CHATSWORTH.

I.

CLOSE OF THE LONDON SEASON.

The London season of 18— was scarcely over, though the wintry summer had worn itself painfully away into mid-autumn. A few more coming parties, casting their dull shadows before, still furnished excuses for those to bestow their inanity a little longer upon the town, who would otherwise have hastened to bestow it elsewhere; a few more budding flirtations were still to be mutually flattered into a fitting growth for the heated and perfumed atmosphere of a country conservatory to "force" them at once into the "bright consummate flower" of a declaration, or the bitter dead-sea fruit of a

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divorce; a few more conspiracies were yet to be completed, in vice of which a winter in Paris was to be "made glorious summer," by the entanglement of some booby heir in the double meshes of a manœuvring mother and a heartless beauty; a few more pigeons were to be plucked at Crocky's, to feather the travelling nests of the periodical migrators to the pastoral hells of the Rheingau;—and, running their sweet course purely and brightly through all these—like a bright and pure stream through the foul streets of some pestilent city—a few more of those innocent and happy passions were to be warmed to that mutual interfusing of two young and pure hearts into one, which, even in the Great World that we are glancing at—nay,—which *there* more than anywhere else—forms the only perfect and enduring bliss of which the life of that World is capable.

The matter-of-fact reader will be good enough to comprehend, from the foregoing,

that the period at which our Chatsworth records open was about the third week in August,—just as the princely hospitalities of that noble demesne, having commenced earlier than usual, (with a view to a subsequent sojourn beneath Italian skies,) had collected within its classic walls, one of the most charmingly assorted companies, that even the fine intellectual taste and consummate social tact of the noble host himself had ever before made acceptable to each other.

It consisted—

But stay,—as we desire that the chief stars in our constellation of illuminati should obtain for themselves in the reader's imagination that "local habitation" in the absence of which they would presently pass into empty abstractions—would not merely "come like shadows," (which is what we desire),—but would inevitably "so depart,"—(which is what we deprecate),—the patience of the better-instructed among those readers

must be content to tolerate us for a brief space, whilst we try our skill in landscape-painting: "a soul" for which, the fairy-land wherein we shall presently find ourselves might "create under the ribs" of ——— himself. (Here the reader of taste is requested to insert the name of his or her favourite aversion among the existing professors of that ill-understood art.)

In virtue, then, of that unlimited power which we "slaves of the lamp" possess for the nonce over all those who voluntarily place themselves within the scope of our spell, we take the liberty of casting that spell over our readers, wheresoever they may be—of lifting them, one and all, "above this visible diurnal sphere"—wafting them for a moment, by a fiat of our sovereign will, through the pleasant empyrean—and then gently depositing them on the bosom of their mother earth, at that particular spot where it is our pleasure that they should commence their local associations

"with us and with our comedy;" the spot which we choose to consider as the threshold of the demesne of Chatsworth Palace.

II.

AN ENGLISH SPA.

On opening their eyes, shaking their ears, and looking immediately around them, our aërial travellers will find themselves on a little patch of smooth-shaven turf, inclosed by a low, light, iron railing; dotted with diminutive flower beds, that look as if they had been cut out by a pastrycook's pie-mould; furnished here and there with green garden-chairs; and finished in the centre by a baby fountain, falling into what may be mistaken for a moderate-sized punch-bowl,—its edges glittering with moss-grown spar, its surface floating a single water-lily, and its shallows gay with gold and silver fish.

Doubtless the reader at first imagines that

we have, by way of being facetious, conveyed him to the "lawn" of some London cit's "cottage of gentility," on Clapham Common or Brixton Hill. Yet the great lumbering white-washed building that bounds his view close at hand,—with its gaping doors, staring windows, and straggling walls,—looking like something between a barrack and a cotton mill, only uglier than either,—forbids this conclusion.

A glance upward discloses the truth: we are standing on the "terrace" in front of "The Old Bath Hotel," at Matlock Bath.

It may please us, presently, to enter for a moment the obsolete halls of Dame Cumming; for they are classical ground: but metal more attractive than all the classics in anti-Christendom awaits us where we stand. Turn your back then, reader, on yonder old-fashioned boarding-house, which the Wizard of the North has preserved from demolition

by writing his magic name on one of its window panes, and where the beautiful Lady of Annesley made herself and her lover immortal by writing her's on the heart of the boy Byron—step a little to the left of the spot where we first took the liberty of depositing you—and look before, above, and on either side of you.

Of course, if a male, you belong to "The Travellers," or are qualified for it; and if a female, you are as familiar with the hills and plains, the groves and glades, which form the picturesque "lions" of Italy and Greece, as your kitchen-maid is with those of Greenwich, or your *couturière* with those of the Rhine. Yet, if you ever before looked upon a scene which, space for space, equalled in the three great components of scenic effect,—grandeur, beauty, and singularity,—the one that now lies within your ken,—be pleased to point it out, that we may proceed to do over again our travels in search of the picturesque.

Before you decide, however, examine the scene in detail. Right before you—close under your feet, as it were—rise what are evidently the extreme tops of lofty forest trees,—out of which (for the ear as well as the eye is enlisted in the office of admiration,) issues a gurgling, prattling sound, telling of a bright river, that for ever runs its sunless course, a hundred feet below.

Beyond the moveless tops of those trees,—not more than double the distance just named,—rises perpendicularly, several hundred feet, what would seem to be a solid barren cliff, but that Nature, a tirewoman whose taste and skill would put to shame those of Maradan herself, has clothed it, from head to foot, with a robe of such infinite richness and variety of material, such exquisite fashion, such felicitous adaptation to the forms on which it rests, and in such artistical harmony with the hues and colours distributed over it, that it looks a thing of living and breathing beauty, rather

than a dead lump of everlasting granite. Observe too that, here and there, small patches of the lichened rock peep out from amidst the clinging or clasping foliage, as if on purpose to heighten by contrast the beauty of the general effect, and at the same time to prevent the imagination from forgetting what lies beyond. Indeed in the absence of this pretty expedient of Nature to keep in mind her "so potent art," of clothing all things in beauty when it so pleases her, one might fancy the whole to be some supernatural wall of forest, piled perpendicularly, tier above tier, to the clouds.

Turn we now to the right, and the eye pursues the same vast wall of forest, as it recedes windingly for a brief distance, and then, turning a huge elbow to the left, is backed entirely by the grey sky. Midway, however, from the latter point, and (apparently) at the extremity of the lofty terrace on which we are standing, rises, from the side

of a declivity out of sight, the white crenated spire of a lovely little church, seeming to spring out of the green turf, like the fairy spirit of the place, come thither to watch over its still beauty, (so Fancy prompts, and those who are too wise to listen to her had better leave us and our "gentle" readers to ourselves, and attend to good Mrs. Cumming's dinner-bell,) and protect it from the great Titanic monster that towers up above the ravine in an opposite direction, and seems (as we shall presently see) to be perpetually threatening it with a stony destruction.

Turning now in the direction just indicated —namely, to our full left as we stand on the turfed terrace of the Old Bath Hotel—we observe, in continuation, as it were, of the terrace, a broad rising pathway, which, as it mounts recedingly, pierces presently into a dense wood, where it is lost; but the eye, following its lead, continues to mount till it reaches the summit of an immense range of forest-clad

mountain, which shuts in all this side of the view. The wood on this portion of the scene being entirely of fir,—chiefly larch,—its sharp cones, seen against the blue sky, give to the mountain the air of a crowned monarch.

This magnificent object is met, about a quarter of a mile from where we stand, by one still more remarkable, consisting of the continuation of that gorgeous screen of forest-clothed cliffs which faces the spot whence we are taking our survey. But the nature of the wood and vegetation which clothe these cliffs is so entirely different from that of the opposite side of the ravine,—being composed of every variety of our own indigenous forest-trees and shrubs, unmixed with any of the formal fir and larch which exclusively cover the hills just described,—that the contrast is as striking as it is beautiful,—the bleak and foreign-looking aspect of the one, setting off like a foil the rich, stately,

and umbrageous masses, the festooned elegance, and occasional feathery lightness and ornamented grace, of the other.

These two opposite heights close in the view on the left, about a quarter of a mile from where we stand; but between them, a little nearer to us, though not appearing to be disjoined, but only to tower above them both, and frown down upon them like a great grey mass of moveless clouds, stands, or rather hangs in the burthened air, the enormous Titanic form that our fancy has assimilated to the demon of the spot, rebuked and kept in awe by the beautiful protecting spirit of it, which rises, in the form of a Christian temple, at the opposite extremity of the view.

We have hitherto been concerning ourselves only with the upper, the lower, and the more distant departments of the remarkable view before and about us. Look we now to those which form the central portion, nearer at

hand. On the right of the particular spot where we now stand, (namely, somewhat to the left, or north, of the little fountain in the centre of the terrace in front of the Old Bath Hotel,) no middle distance is visible; the view being closed upon us abruptly, by the rounding in and joining of the two sides of the ravine, just beyond the church spire that rises at the extremity of the terrace on which we stand: all the lower part of the scene, including one-half of the village, being hidden by the abrupt ascent of the rising ground which forms the terrace. But to the left,—where the receding fir-clad mountain on the one hand, the richly wooded perpendicular cliffs on the other, and the bare overtowering crag in the centre, seem to meet, and close up all egress from the ravine,—a middle distance presents itself, which forms the chief charm —the magic cestus—of the whole unrivalled scene.

Imagine, reader, midway between the spot

on which we stand, and the scene of mingled grandeur and beauty which has fixed us there as by a spell—imagine a light blue mist, ever rising as if from the level on which we stand, but in reality steaming up from the invisible vale below, expanding and rarefying as it rises, till, about halfway up the heights beyond, it melts into the invisible atmosphere. What can this be, but an incense-offering from man to the presiding Deity of the spot, the *genius loci*, who spreads out for his delectation all the grandeur and beauty on which we look?

And so in truth it is, although in vulgar parlance it be but the seacoal smoke from the dwellings which form the unseen hamlet below! for what else but a religious love for nature and her works, could have planted a nest of human dwellings in a spot where, a score or two of years ago, nothing existed but a wild and inaccessible ravine, formed out of the broken faces of a rifted rock, and no foot

of whose paths and road-ways, no fragment of whose dwellings, consists to this day of anything but the debris of that rock?

There is not in all Matlock Bath half a dozen square yards of natural level: the road that traverses the hamlet is cut out of the solid rock, on the left or west bank of the stream (the Derwent) that runs at the bottom of the ravine; the buildings are as it were cemented into the receding face of the rock, on the same side of the river, and rise behind and above each other, tier above tier; the approach to every one of them is by a steep artificial terrace, that terminates when the dwelling is reached; and you have only to suppose the case of some giant hand agitating for a moment the green mountain side, and all the dwellings that cling to it would drop off into the water-course below, like insects from a shaken leaf!

To return from this digression—the effect of the blue mist-like wreaths of smoke that

ever rise from the lower parts of the hamlet, on the dwellings that cling, one by one, against the lofty hill-side, each half hidden in its over-hanging fir-grove, is exceedingly beautiful, as seen from our present point of view: it casts a floating veil over them, that, as it thickens from below, or is partially dispersed by the breeze as it rises, reminds one of that pretty optical illusion, the "Dissolving views."

III.

BUBBLES.

Such then is the scene that presents itself from *one* of the points of view (and there are twenty such, all different, yet all equally remarkable) at the little hamlet, a quarter of a mile long, and fifty yards wide, *un*known to the English traveller by the name of "Matlock Bath,"—our first step over the threshold of

that district of the Peak over which Chatsworth reigns supreme.

Considering that, since the marvellous "bubble" discoveries of the "old man," and all the other old women, of the German spas, Matlock has grown obsolete,—especially now it has become accessible at the cost of a few hours' time, and a few shillings' money, —we are much too reasonable to ask people to be pleased with it: it is out of fashion, and there is no more to be said. But when English spa-goers have expended all their spare admiration on the aristocratic "finery" of Toeplitz and Carlsbad—(whose very innkeepers write themselves Countesses); on the Greenwich fair gaiety, gambling, and gormandising of Baden-Baden; on the cockney pastoralities of Wiesbaden; the sullen, snake-haunted seclusion of Schlangenbad; the leaden solitude (schwein excepted,) of Langen Schwalbach; the Regent's park ruralities of Marienbad; the Primrose-hill

prettiness of Kissengen; the tumble-down antiquity of Aix-la-Chapelle; and (in short) all the other manifold wonders and beauties of all the other spas that it is their present pleasure to patronise;—when, we say, English spa-hunters have exhausted and grown tired of all these, they may perchance think it worth while to bestow a passing glance (merely out of curiosity) at a spot which as much surpasses them all in picturesque beauty, and scenic grandeur and sublimity, as its pure, limpid, life-giving springs surpass in salubrity the dirty ditch-water, and the "*in*convenient distance," to which the places we have named owe their celebrity.

In the mean-time, proceed we in our course towards the more immediate scenes of our search;—not, however, without halting for a brief space, and baiting our pen-winged hobby, while we wander listlessly through the "Lovers' Walks" that skirt the wooded margin of the gently-flowing Derwent; leaving the "bub-

bled" and be-Granvilled world behind us, and forgetting for the moment that there is anything else on this breathing earth, but the lapsing stream, the laughing pastures, the lowing cattle, and the piping wood-birds, that surround us this divine evening, and the profound stillness of those lovely shades where we may lie and listen, as in a dream of Arcadia, to the unpronounced words,—" far above singing,"—of those imaginary lovers with whom these walks are peopled.

IV.

THE RAVINE.

Descending from our little artificial elevation on the Terrace of the Old Bath, we are presently buried, as it were, in the stony jaws of the ravine, and cannot see fifty yards before us in any direction, except upward, where the wooded heights of the receding

hills on the left, and the precipitous cliffs on the right, rise (often) above the clouds.

But, buried as we are in this marble mausoleum of the living, (for every building about us is formed of the rude marble which constitutes the entire district,) the impressions which come to us from without, are touched and coloured by anything but funereal associations. The smiling pastures, and the sparkling river that hurries or lapses through them, glance and peep at us through the trees at every step, telling tales of pastoral peace, that nothing around threatens to mar; and the towering heights above, on either hand, and in front, are clothed and crowned with that luxuriant "pomp of groves," and that lovely garniture of clustering shrubs and clasping parasites, which, from the multitudinous LIFE that lurks or sports within and among them, cannot be contemplated, even from the confines of the grave itself, without a feeling that DEATH is but a baseless

abstraction of the human mind, and that Nature knows it not.

A few score yards northward, still on the river's margin, brings us to that end of the hamlet; but the ravine winds on for half a mile further, bounded now only by its own stately confines on either side, and overlooked—almost over-shadowed—by one bare and apparently blasted shoulder of rock, which towers threateningly above the two masses of umbrage that would otherwise seem to meet in each other's arms,—looking as if it stood there for ever, to forbid the banns between the feminine grace and beauty of the fir-clothed and gently receding Masson, on the one hand, and the masculine grandeur and Titanic dignity of the erect and commanding Tor, on the other.

As we proceed, the gorge shuts more closely in on the left, but opens a little on the right, and gives to the eye long lines of the Derwent, loitering leisurely through its banks of eme-

rald turf, on which kine are feeding; while here and there, on the left, a little cottage ornée peers from out the wood-clothed face of the rock above our head, looking like "a weed which has no business there," and whispering us that its perplexed inhabitants, troubled between the opposite claims of society and of solitude, have fallen into the foolish blunder of missing the merits and compassing the discomforts of each.

Still keeping the winding road at the deep bottom of the ravine, close to the river's brink, we presently reach the northern extremity of the gorge; when the scene suddenly opens out, right and left, into a spacious pastoral valley, bounded on either hand by receding hills, richly wooded, and studded here and there, for the first mile or so from the singular spot we have just left, with single dwellings, of that peculiar description, between the cottage and the chateau, which are to be found nowhere else but in England, and nowhere

else in England presenting so exquisitely English a character as here;—as far removed from the ornate elegance and elaborate grace of the Italian Villa, as from the stiff and staring plainness of the French *campagne*. So sweetly do these dwellings harmonize, both in the style of their architecture, and the tone and colour of their material, (the warm, grey stone of the district,) with the scenery in which they stand, that they seem as it were to have grown there,—their warm, lichen-tinted faces blending with the soft green of the pleasant uplands out of which they rise, and with the shadowy umbrage in which they are half embowered.

In other respects there is nothing remarkable in the country on which we now emerge, except the lofty isolated hills that rise here and there in the receding distances on either hand and in front, clothed from foot to summit with smooth turf, each coroneted by a little company of lofty trees, that, seen

feathering against the grey sky, look like the fantastic head-gear of some wild Indian beauty.

Another charm of the landscape we have now before us is, the delightful contrast offered by its expansive breadth, and its soft and smiling uniformity of tone, to the deep and frowning shadows, the abrupt broken surfaces, and the "dim religious lights," which marked the scene we have just left. It is like emerging from the pillared aisles and stately portals of some vast ruined cathedral, on to the green and smiling solitudes to which the chances and changes of "time and the hour" may have left it.

V.

LIKE BEGETS LIKE.

Every step we advance up the valley of the Derwent, grows more and more redolent of the

atmosphere of that spot which is now evidently near at hand. Like the fabled tree within a certain distance of whose shadow no unclean thing would harbour, Chatsworth spreads its beautifying influence on all things within that circle at the extremity of one of whose radii our approach to it commenced.

On the southern side of Matlock Bath, the scenery, with infinite natural loveliness, is deformed, every here and there, by one of those enormities with which the pestilent Demon of commerce has desecrated a land that had otherwise rivalled in beauty the most beautiful of those in fable. Here stands, midway up the side of some fair, forest-clothed hill, everlastingly overlooking the vale, for miles around, with its innumerable eyes,—a vast Cotton Mill. There, down by the soft, sweet margin of the river, just where a gentle declivity in its course has broken its serene face into sparkling dimples—lo! a never-ceasing noise of innumerable hammers issues

from low blackened walls, that, day and night, in sunshine and in moonlight, vomit forth vollies of poisonous smoke, that blast the trees all round, till no bird will sing in them.

Not much less offensive to the eye of taste—see! the be-pillared and pedimented mansion, or the be-battlemented Castle, of some Cotton-Lord or Iron-Master, hanging heavily against the brow of yonder green upland, like a loathsome goitre on the neck of some mountain maiden, that were else fair as her own hills.

Once passed the threshold of that circle of which Chatsworth is the centre, we have not only no more of these painful and offensive anomalies, but everything seems to take a tone and colour from those of the presiding divinity of the district. From the feudal dignity of Haddon, in its venerable decay, and the princely splendour of Alton Towers in its modern magnificence, down to the way-side hovel of the poorest peasant, all is in keeping

with itself, with its purposes, and with the objects which surround it. Every dwelling speaks the precise station of its owner, and that he is content with that station; neither shrinking painfully from the one below him, nor straining awkwardly towards that which is above him. The pleasant homestead of the substantial yeoman stands soberly in the midst of its subject fields, aiming at nothing higher than to mark the dwelling-place of their simple-minded owner. The modest domicile of the village pastor looks blandly from out its sheltering trees,—the emblem of that holy and happy calm, which it is the blessed office of its inmate to spread around him, but which never yet emanated from the paltry prettiness of a dandy parsonage. Even within the elegant retirement of the world-wearied recluse, or the philosophic seclusion of the lettered student, who are content to view mankind from "the loop-holes of retreat,"

No demon whispers—Visto have a taste!

no vulgar classicalities shock the scholar's eye, by courting it in the midst of scenes where they have no business—no wealthy fool's "Folly" dares to face and affront the simplicities that would laugh it to scorn.

Such is the reflected influence of a spot like Chatsworth, in the individual instances which occur within its circle. In the collective ones which have grown up around it, that influence is no less remarkable and salutary: witness the charming little village of Rowsley, in view of which we now arrive, just before turning off on the right, to ascend yon gentle rise, that screens Chatsworth itself from our view.

Rowsley is no pattern hamlet—no

> Auburn, loveliest village of the plain;

still less is it an Edensor—the "Folly" (the only one he has ever indulged in,) of the noble owner of Chatsworth—a toy village, embroidered into one corner of the northern skirts of the park, to which we shall in-

troduce the reader by and by. Rowsley is the very ideal of a country village, without a single touch of the *beau* ideal about it. It is perfect in its pastoral and picturesque beauty, rather by reason of the utter absence of anything to offend the eye or shock the taste, than from the presence of anything to call forth remark or admiration. It is not a meeting of many things, on account of their more or less conformity one with another; but a growing of many out of one, by a natural sequence of natural circumstances, connected with the locality, and its relation to the neighbourhing domain. The passage of the stream (the Derwent) across the public road at this point, early marked the spot for a simple bridge; and the junction of this line of way with that leading to Chatsworth, naturally indicated the site of an Inn, that should form a sort of outer lodge to the Palace, for the behoof of those humble visitors who came thither to admire and

wonder at a distance, and then pass on their way. And such seems to have been the order of succession in the present instance: first the bridge,—which is almost classically beautiful in its severe simplicity; then the Traveller's Rest,—catching the same tone and character—as beauty ever begets beauty;—and lastly, the little rural village—of which an Inn always forms the nucleus.

This exquisite little Inn bears date, over its low gothic portal, about the middle of the seventeenth century; yet is it as perfect in every feature as if it had been finished yesterday. Its style is the simplest form of the Gothic; its material, the beautiful rose-tinted sandstone of the district, freckled all over with those beauty-spots which no hand but that of Time can place to advantage, but in all other respects immaculate as if it had been preserved as a model under a glass case.

As a single object, there is nothing else in

this whole district so entirely pleasing as the little Inn at Rowsley, as it first offers itself to view on approaching the village from Matlock; half its low form being hidden by the flowering shrubs that everywhere clothe it as with a garment; its trim lawns and gay flowerbeds spreading all about it in easy negligence, like the embroidered skirts of that garment, except in front, where it advances, undraped, up to the very edge of the public way, as if to greet the traveller, and bid him welcome.

As we have, by rights, no business to enter this little village in our way to Chatsworth, the road thither branching off to the right immediately before reaching the bridge, we must no longer linger within sight of its pleasant walks, lest the breathing stillness of their sweet solitudes, (especially of that one of them which winds along by the river's brink, right into the Park of Chatsworth, without once calling up a hint of human dwelling

or human doing, beyond the half-indicated foot-path on which you tread) should tempt us to lie down and ruminate the sweet fancies we have gathered there in times gone by, instead of hastening to feed afresh at the banquet of bright realities that awaits us on the other side of yonder sloping mound of smooth turf, which is all that now stands between us and Chatsworth;—like the green curtain that hides from the spectator, till the appointed moment, the opening scene of some spendid drama.

VI.

THE HOSTELRY.

As, unluckily, we do not possess, like the great enchanter in Thalaba, the faculty of passing through half-a-dozen gates at the same moment, we shall now take the liberty of transporting the reader to that particular entrance to the domain of Chatsworth which

is best calculated to obtain for it, in his imagination, that "local habitation" so necessary to the purpose for which we are met.

We have hitherto, be it observed, been approaching Chatsworth from the south, and have just pointed to it, as lying perdu behind the green hill that backs the lovely little pastoral village of Rowsley.

A wave of our author-itative wand, a wink of the "mind's eye" of our docile reader, and, lo! we stand together before the little dandified Inn (aping an Italian villa), that flanks the northern entrance to the park.

As it is "an ill wind that blows nobody good," so it must be an "air from heaven" itself that brings no ill upon its wings. We have seen some of the *good* that the atmosphere of Chatsworth breathes everywhere around it. All the *ill* we have been able to trace to it, in the course of a pretty long and close acquaintance, is confined within the

walls of the somewhat too-pretending hostelry of the Duke's own village of Edensor,—whose pillared porticos, carpetted saloons, carved and French-polished furniture, furbelowed draperies, and superfine waiting-gentlefolk, seem contrived and brought together for no purpose but to exemplify what a country inn should *not* be, in each and all of these particulars.

And we may be wrong in tracing even this error to the cause here assigned for it. There is a certain material which the cleverest fingers in fairydom could not manufacture into "a silk purse;" and the queen of all the fairies, with all her subject fairies to aid her, could make nothing better of Bottom than an ass. Let us be reasonable, then, and not expect that a Derbyshire Boniface can set up his final rest within a bow-shot of Chatsworth Palace, and remain deaf to the demon-whispers of "taste." Moreover, being, as it were by special appointment, the Duke's own

innkeeper (for on great visiting occasions some of the bachelor guests of Chatsworth are relegated for the night to his roof), he holds himself the prince of publicans, and comports himself accordingly.

But what a contrast to the little hostelry at Rowsley, where Isaac Walton himself would have delighted to "take his ease" of an evening, and hum the melody of his Milkmaid's Song, while he saw to the savoury cooking of his own barbel! Nay, perchance he did so luxuriate, angling from its little natural arbour overhanging the Derwent; eating his simple supper in the little cabin that looks on the public road; and reposing in the fragrant whiteness of its latticed dormitory overlooking the laurelled lawn. What more likely? for the Derwent was one of his favourite streams. Certes, every stone of its rustic porch and vestibule "prates of his whereabout;" every wall of the latter is hung to this day with the implements of his gently-

ungentle craft; every object about the place breathes the air of his divine book, or his book of them.

VII.

A PATTERN VILLAGE.

Entering the Edensor gate of the Park, we cannot choose but be arrested, after the first few paces, by glimpses, through a pair of spacious iron gates on our right, of a scene which is unique in its way. Having looked upon it for the space of ten minutes, with impressions made up of a mystified mixture of doubt, curiosity, and a sort of uneasy pleasure which half persuades us to call it pain, we inquire of ourselves (there being nobody else at hand) *what* it is that we look on. Is it a scene in a play? Has the Duke, ever "on hospitable thoughts intent," been getting up Love in a Village, *al fresco*, for the amuse-

ment of his guests, and is this the "scenery and decorations" of it, left standing, ready for a second performance?

The pleasant chimes of a little church that rises above us on the left, as we stand gazing, answer distinctly, No! And we must believe them: for that exquisite little temple of Christian worship is evidently "a true thing," whatever the cluster of what look like human dwellings may be—or what *would* look like human dwellings, if it were not that human creatures of the ordinary height could almost look down their delicate chimneys, while standing on their diminutive lawns; which latter, being studded here and there with miniature flower-beds, look like so many embroidered velvet waistcoat-pieces, spread out for choice!

Hark! a whistle from behind yonder green upland! As it does not cause the whole affair to split into two equal parts, and, moving away by some invisible agency, church and all, give place to something else, that

whistle cannot be the prompter's, and what we look upon is not one of the scenic illusions we at first took it for. What else then may it be? and to what end designed? The gate of entrance is open; there is nobody to say us nay; we will enter, and examine the scene a little more closely.

A broad, gravelled, carriage-road, but without a single mark of carriage-wheel to impeach the perfection of its level, leads windingly up a gentle ascent, either side of it being bounded by a raised footway of green, smooth-shaven turf, immediately adjoining the inner extremity of which rise the fanciful trellised boundaries, no two alike in pattern, of certain diminutive flower-gardens, growing diminutive flowers, and leading respectively to as many diminutive dwellings, no one of which has anything in common with its neighbour, except the marked resemblance that each and all of them bear to the pretty plaster of Paris light-houses that the Italian

image-boys carry about London streets on their heads.

Looking at each of these fairy-habitations separately, you fancy yourself peering, with one eye, through the peep-hole of those ingenious show-boxes by which certain house-beautifiers in Old Bond Street inveigle the unwary a long way from home "in search of the picturesque." Looking at the whole together, you may fancy them the deserted domiciles (got together by some strange magic) of all those youthful visionaries of the last London season, who commenced their married life with amiable idealities about "love in a cottage," and, being able to afford it, corrected their error before the end of the honeymoon.

And yet the unsullied brightness of every window, the immaculate whiteness of every drapery within, the perfect preservation of every flower and leaf without, not to mention the blue smoke that rises gracefully from

the graceful chimnies of some few of these dwellings, forbid all idea of desertion. We must guess again.

Perhaps, then, the singular scene on which we look is the last, best work—the *opus magnum*—(carried into effect by favour of his friend the Duke) of a certain Prince Prettyman of the May-fair coteries of the last century, who, having come to his fortune after long waiting for it, felt that he must die immediately (as every body does under such circumstances), and being determined not to do so without benefiting *his species*, hit upon this method, in the shape of alms-houses for decayed dandies.

The guess is a happy one: but it evidently misses the mark. Were it as you suppose, the drawing-room window of each domicile (it being a soft summer's evening) would present the velvet-capped head, leaning on the jewelled hand, of its respective occupant, —as that of poor Brummel ever did under

similar circumstances, when he lodged over the little bookseller's shop in the Rue Royale at Calais. Whereas, here, there is no touch or sign of human or any other life; all is silent and motionless as the villages we wander through in dreams.

Yet not so. See! the window-sill, (till now vacant,) round which cluster those lovely roses of Provence and honey-suckles of England, is occupied by a snow-white cat. Can it be? Have we at last found or lost our way to the long-sought domain of the transformed princess in the prettiest of fairy tales? Instead of being, as we fancied ourselves, close to Chatsworth Palace, are we "fifteen thousand miles from everywhere;"—as Planché's pretty version of the tale intimates that fairy residence to be situated?

Reader or spectator of the unique scene that has so inopportunely stopped us in our progress, thy conjectures as to its use or destination would never hit the mark, shouldst thou guess till doomsday.

You give it up?

Learn, then, that this romance in stucco is neither more nor less than a real village, inhabited by real peasants and labourers, who, like other peasants and labourers, "live by bread," (ay, and bacon too, "though by your smiling you would seem to doubt it);" getting that bread and bacon by the sweat of their brow; growing their own cabbages and potatoes, (somewhere out of sight); brewing their own beer; marrying, multiplying, and performing all the other offices of ordinary men and women in the like station.

But no—the blank silence that reigns everywhere throughout this seemingly favoured spot, even now that the labours of the day are over, proclaims something apart from ordinary village life—something, if not wrong, *too right*, about this rural La Trappe,—where the men, and the women too, seem to have forgotten how to talk, the dogs how to bark, the cats how to mew, and even the birds how

to sing: and as for the little children, they have evidently never come to their tongues at all—a "hush!" or an upheld finger, being the extent of their intercourse with their parents and with one another!

Seriously, this pattern village of Edensor is the prettiest idea imaginable—on paper; and there it is that the Duke must alone have contemplated it, before carrying the design of his architect into effect; or his fine natural taste would have predicted the almost painfully-artificial result.

The case is simply this: on the spot at present occupied by the model village of Edensor, there not long ago stood (within the very precincts of the park,) a squalid hamlet, comprising the usual amount of tumbledown cottages, reeking dung-heaps, dreary duck-ponds, draggletailed mothers, dowdy daughters, dirty-faced children, and all the accompanying ills and eyesores that English poverty is heir to; not forgetting the

usual proportion of those amiable inventions of modern legislation, where boor and beer are "licensed to be drunk on the premises":—in short, a very blotch upon the fair aristocratic face of Chatsworth; an unwholesome, unsightly eruption, for which, all ordinary modes of treatment being tried in vain, there was none left but the empirical one, of *driving the disease inwards*. And this, by the shallow counsel of his estate's physician, the good, kind, and generous Duke has adopted; little guessing the fatal result upon the patient, and as little likely to learn it from *that* quarter as from any other,—seeing that the disease we are dying of is always the last to which we believe ourselves liable. The least reputable and tractable of the quondam inhabitants of Edensor have been relegated to a village about a mile off, erected purposely for them by the Duke; and the *élite* have been installed in this *beau*-ideal of a village, at an almost nominal rent, but under

a tenure, the conditions of which may be guessed from what we have observed while looking on this prettiest and most plausible of mistakes—which can only be described by negatives. It has no shops, no smithy, no "public," no pound, no pump;—no cage, no stocks;—no quoits, no single-stick, no wrestling, no kite-flying, no cricketing, no trap-ball, no pitch and toss, no dumps;—no shouting, no singing, no hallooing, no squabbling, no scolding;—no love-making, no gossipping, no tittle-tattle, no scan—Yes! one thing the miserable denizens of this "happy village" have gained, in vice of their elevation in the scale of social life: they may scandalize one another to their hearts! content! And it is to be hoped that they do so: for what is left but scandal, to those whose lives must be conducted in a whisper?

VIII.

THE PARK AND THE PALACE.

Turning our backs (not reluctantly) upon the pretty, but ill-placed toy, which, we more than suspect, an eye to business, rather than to beauty and propriety, has caused to be foisted into one corner of Chatsworth Park, (an outrage not unlike hanging a Brummagem jewel in the ear of one of those noble female faces which mark the house of Burlington), the lovely expanse of the park itself opens before us in all its stately simplicity, and with an air so purely English, yet so perfectly classical, that one is tempted to inquire how it is that the two epithets admit of a "yet" coming between them.

Deferring the reply to this inquiry till we have nothing better to do than to seek it, let us observe, how nobly the view opens out on

the right and left, as we advance,—showing, as far as the eye can scan the scene as a whole, one unbroken expanse of turf, embroidered at intervals by distant groups of beech, or elm, or oak, that look as if they were artificially worked into that rich velvet robe, to relieve its uniformity; or (still more beautiful) here and there is one standing in that "single blessedness," in which those noblest denizens of inanimate nature are alone capable of attaining the true amount of their stately birthright.

This beautiful expanse, vast as it is, at no point extends beyond the limit that it pleases and satisfies the eye to compass at one view, in a scene of this nature. At the precise point where, if extended further, it would pass that limit, the rising ground on all sides becomes clothed in dense umbrageous groves, (not *woods*, which present a less cultivated aspect,) opening here and there towards their lower skirts, into short glades; but, as they ascend the heights which close in the view all

around, they usurp the entire empire of the soil, and present one unbroken mass of foliage, swelling into cloud-like heaps, of more or less breadth and density, according to the varied nature of their character, and the soil they crown.

Another few paces, and we perceive that what has hitherto appeared one vast unbroken expanse of turf, is, at the foot of the soft declivity to which we have now advanced, divided into two nearly equal portions, by a lovely river, that lapses coolly and quietly through it, for the most part visible throughout its course, but at two or three intervals hidden by small detached companies of beeches, and patches of underwood, that overhang its brink on either side. We now perceive, too, that the turf is irregularly intersected, on both sides of the stream, by a winding road, white as snow, but so managed, as to the course it takes in relation to the perpetual undulations of the ground, that its

almost startling whiteness never interferes with that general tone of softness and repose which is the pervading character of the scene. The effect of these roads is (quite by accident, probably,) singularly pleasing. It reminds one of a ribbon of virgin white, wreathed into the profuse tresses of some otherwise unadorned beauty, whose face would, in the absence of this relief, be in some measure eclipsed by the too profuse splendour of its natural ornament.

And, lo! that face itself now bursts upon us suddenly, in all its supreme fairness, basking luxuriously in the declining sunlight, on the bosom of that soft acclivity which rises from the river's brink, and which the last few paces have brought within our view.

Having thus (chiefly, we confess, for our own delectation,) brought the indulgent reader face to face with the immediate scene of our general narrative, we, as in duty bound, humbly

make our bow, and give place to our betters there assembled, as intimated at the opening of our acquaintance with the reader. Henceforth, of *us* there will no more be heard in these records than if we were existent only in that limbo of the imagination from which nothing is ever capable of removing us but those scenes and objects of external nature which we could not help encountering on our journey hither. Henceforth (so far as these pages are concerned) we live but in the thoughts and sentiments and imaginations that we have undertaken to record: and he who does more or other than this, can be no fitting, because no faithful recorder.

IX.

A GENIUS.

It is the evening of a rich autumnal day in the latter end of the August of 18—. (This is the nearest approximation to a specific date that the exigencies of our narrative either admit or require.) You observe that range of lofty gilded windows, each composed of two plates only of glass, which seem to look upon us proudly, athwart that stately lawn, with their great eyes glittering in the yellow light of the setting sun. That is the library of Chatsworth Palace; and within it are assembled, from some accidental circumstance arising out of the recent after-dinner conversation, the little company to which the reader was on the point of being introduced when he was first invited to listen to these records.

Let us enter, and see of whom the company consists.

Truly, a goodly assemblage to look upon! And even in this, how nobly does it vindicate the power of intellect over matter! The supreme superiority, in personal appearance, of the English aristocracy over all the rest of the nation, is universally admitted. But the superiority, in this particular, of the aristocracy of intellect over that of birth, is still greater: for, to the former rule there are exceptions; but to the latter, none. There be plebeians, both male and female, who might compete for the palm of personal beauty with the Cavendishes, the Howards, or the Tollemaches. But this is confined to the beauty of form: the beauty of intellect, nothing but the actual presence of intellect ever yet communicated.

What a noble head is that, bending slightly aside and downward, as if the face (which we cannot see) were directed to the ground,

in token of some absorbing thought, that presses on the mind within! The rich curls (black as night) that cluster over it, the attitude, and the fixed repose of the whole figure, give to it the look of a clothed Antinous.

Who is it dares to indulge in a brown study, in such a company as this? It can only be, and it is, the "genius" of his day—of a day in which, but for him, genius would be a dead letter,—so effectually does its would-be nurse, Civilization, swathe, and dandle, and polish, and petrify it, during its infancy and non-age, into the ordinary and accepted form and bearing demanded by the exigencies of social life: so that now-a-days we meet with persons who, having been intended by nature for geniuses, are actually gentlemen.

The personage before us, Mr. Tressyllian Toms, is not one of these: he is a genius, and therefore no gentleman.

In the code which regulates the etiquette of a Court like that now assembled at

Chatsworth,—a Court which acknowledges no aristocracy but that of intellect,—Genius, under whatever name and form it present itself, and whatever garb it wear, claims the pas of all other pretensions: and Mr. Tresyllian Toms is, as we have said, a genius. To Mr. Tressyllian Toms, therefore, we beg to introduce the reader personally, first and foremost of our gay and brilliant company.

Was there ever such a jumble of anomalies and contradictions as Tressyllian Toms! His name, (as names, somehow or other, not seldom do—probably because they have a hand in the matter,) in some sort pronounced his character; which was an incomprehensible Olla Podrida of all imaginable contradictions. He was at once a poet and a petitmaitre; a philosopher and a fashion-monger; a true wit and a trifling word-catcher; a compound of wisdom and folly, of brilliance and blundering, of sense and nonsense, of elegance and awkwardness, of natural refinement and natural vulgarity.

There was a "contradiction in terms," even in the physiognomy of Tressyllian Toms: if you looked at him *en profile*, he reminded you of a Roman hero of past times, or a Greek rebel of present ones; if you met him unexpectedly, face to face, you might have chanced to mistake him for the keeper of a menagerie of wild beasts—the man who puts his head into the lion's mouth.

For the rest,—Mr. Tressyllian Toms dressed like a player, harangued like a mountebank, thought like a sage, felt like a hero, and wrote like an angel—or if not, certes like no other mere "human mortal."

We have said that Mr. Tressyllian Toms was a fop and a fashion-monger: but the sagacious reader will not have so mistaken our estimate of his character as to suppose that he was either of these, or that he was anything else, in the ordinary acceptation of the terms. We have described him generally as "a genius;" consequently, whatever form or garb that

attribute might assume for the nonce, it was always put on "with a difference" from that of other people;—and in the particular in question, the difference was remarkable. If Mr. Tressyllian Toms paid allegiance at the footstool of Fashion, it was in the manner in which a certain class of modern lovers pay court to their mortal mistresses,—by thwarting all their desires, and setting their most solemn decrees at defiance. He followed the fashion, as a cockney sportsmen follows the hounds—by running over them. If the ungracious truth must be confessed, Mr. Tressyllian Toms was something of a cockney in most things.

If, again, our friend was, intellectually as well as physically speaking, a fop, it was only because he objected to think, to do, or to be, anything like the rest of mankind. If his lot had been cast in the dark ages of the human mind, or in those semi-bright ones which preceded them, he would have been the founder and the prophet of a new religion,

or a new code of morals,—a Mahomet, or an Ignatius Loyola. Living in a period when the existence of a Deity has been reduced to a mathematical demonstration, and a future world is the necessary corollary from a present one, he fancied (and to his private friends proclaimed) himself an Atheist.

It may be suspected that in all great geniuses there is an infusion, more or less, of quackery. In *our* genius it was more than a *soupçon*. In a word, Mr. Tressyllian Toms was the most brilliant and accomplished of quacks—a sort of Coleridge, Cagliostro, and Admirable Crichton, rolled into one.

This mention of the greatest man, in a purely intellectual point of view, that our day has produced,—for such, with all his faults and errors, Coleridge undoubtedly was,—reminds us of another particular, besides his spice of quackery, in which the "genius" of our Chatsworth party resembled that extraordinary personage. He would talk—

ye gods, how he would talk! In a word, he would have dumb-founded Coleridge himself, —who talked all the rest of the world to a stand-still.

From all this it will readily be concluded that Mr. Tressyllian Toms enjoyed the enviable distinction of being at once "the glory, jest, and riddle" of the fashionable, the political, and the literary worlds of his day, severally and respectively.

X.

THE LADY BAB BRILLIANT.

Observe that lady, with the sparkling face and Circassian form, who sits ensconced in the deep recesses of that luxurious reading-chair, listening to the handsome dandy who hangs over her, as if his words were the inspirations of that poetry which looks from her own eyes;—whereas they are only the

newest club-engendered scandal, or at best some of the elaborate nothings of fashionable small-talk which he has perchance picked up (without knowing it) from her own last new novel.

That is the Lady Bab Brilliant; the most accomplished writer that her own sex has hitherto produced; and the only one whose pen ever acquired the power of a man's, without losing the ease and grace of a woman's. She is the Millamant at once of letters and of fashionable life,—uniting into one coherent whole a host of seeming contradictions;—the wit and vivacity of a Wortley Montagu, the sagacity and worldly wisdom of a Du Deffand, the heart and social affections of a Sevigné, the penetrating spirit of a De Staël, and the varied accomplishments of all these.

The Lady Bab Brilliant, though she had always been beautiful, had never before united in her face and form so many varied attractions as now: for though she had passed

that "dolce primavera" so dear to dreaming poets and decaying dandies, she had only just attained that "bella eta del'oro" until the advent of which women always lack a something, either in expression, in manner, in *mise*, or in *tournure*, to satisfy the cravings of a really cultivated and consummate taste.

The position of Lady Bab Brilliant in the World of Fashion was a singular one. There is not a vice or folly on which that singular microcosm piques itself, that she had not pierced through and through with the winged arrows of her wit, or scourged with the keen lash of her satire, or "turned the seamy side without" by the breath of her indignant scorn;—not a class to which the barbed shafts of her ridicule did not cling thick and threefold;—scarcely an individual ill-doer who had not appropriated to his or her own particular wearing one or other of the innumerable specimens of head-gear which she had scattered about in lavish profusion, for

the especial wearing of anybody they might chance to fit.

And yet the Lady Bab Brilliant was the very pet and idol of that world which her pen had contributed, more than all others united, to cover with the ridicule, and brand with the scorn, of the wise and good!

What was the explanation of this seeming anomaly?—Simply that the Lady Bab Brilliant, not only did not pretend to be any better than her friends and associates, but in reality *was* no better. She was in truth an epitome, in herself, of all the fashionable follies, and not a few of the fashionable vices, (so called, but not by her or us) which she had so effectually held up to public contempt and indignation, that they would have been ashamed to show their faces, even in the salons of May-Fair, if she herself had not kept them in countenance there, by cherishing each in turn, and paying especial court to those of her associates who did the like. Her

principle, in regard to the small morals of society was—Measures, not Men. She argued, with a good-natured ingenuity all her own, that the vice lies in the dice, not in the dicers; that if there were no vices there could be no vicious people! Accordingly, she was as unsparing in her castigation of all fashionable crimes and misdemeanors (her own included) as she was infinite in her toleration of all fashionable wrong-doers—still not omitting her dear self. She was a sort of female Sheridan, —herself the exemplar of all the social errors she satirised with her pen and her tongue,—

Herself the great original she drew—

(without knowing it). And be it expressly understood, that she was no less the exemplar of their good qualities than their bad ones, —still without knowing it.

XI.

THE LION.

THOUGH it will be quite impossible, even for the most inquisitive and penetrating of readers, to fix the precise date of our Chatsworth records, it is nevertheless in any case dangerous to describe in detail the exact *personel* of those characters who figure in true fictions like ours;—seeing that no precautions can prevent the reader from falling into the unpardonable impertinence (palming it off upon the portrait-painter—) of fixing the likenesses —especially those which are not flattering ones—upon their particular friends and acquaintance, or (most impertinent of all) claiming possession of one themselves.

If it were not for this, we should have felt it our duty to favour the world with minute delineations of the "complement extern" of

all our *dramatis personæ;* for nothing else so marks and fixes them in the imagination of that most flighty of all abstractions, a modern reader of modern fiction. But, as we would especially eschew the imputation of painting anything but "historical" pictures, we shall abstain from the minute details in question, even in the case of Reginald Beltravers,—and bid our readers, after having (if they can) gathered from our sketch a portrait of his intellect, "see his visage in his mind;" just as, could they see his visage, they might gather his mind from *that;* for no two things of distinct natures were ever so typical the one of the other.

Reginald Beltravers was the Crichton, not merely of his circle, but of his day; the most accomplished writer of the most accomplished era of English letters:—practising all styles and classes of composition, and eminent in all;—Novelist, Dramatist, Poet, Historian, Moral Philosopher, Essayist, Critic, Political

Pamphleteer: in each superior to all others, and only rivalled in each by himself.

"Ay"— faintly ejaculates one of the Lord Fannies among our May-fair readers,—"the LION of your Chatsworth menagerie. Well— I don't object to these literary monsters now and then—in the country. They can tell one all about the statues and pictures. They come in very well at a pinch, on a rainy morning, between the rubbers at billiards. I have even known them help out a drowsy dish of polities from the old ones, after dinner. Yes, your LION may be suffered for once and away—in the country—in spite of his odd *tournure*, his queerly trimmed whiskers, and even his incomprehensible coat and unspeakable boots."

But hark in your ear, most sweet and fair Lord Fanny. Our Lion—can you conceive it?—was not only by birth and station, but by look and bearing, a finished gentleman. Nay, so "express and admirable" was his entire

outward man, that, when the fit was on him, it should go hard but he would pass, even in the saloons of Chatsworth, for as much of a fribble and "a man of fashion" as your gracious and graceful self! It was in truth his besetting foible—or forte—which you will. There were times when, as he lounged languidly from his cab, up the steps of the Athenæum, one might mistake him (not seeing the intellect and passion pictured in his marble face) for the *lay man* of some "eminent" tailor.

We have said that our eccentric friend Toms was a genius. Such, with all his gifts and accomplishments, was not Reginald Beltravers;—though perhaps no one else ever touched so closely upon the verge of that intellectual Charybdis, without tumbling into it. The consequence was, that although, like his friend Toms, he was a category of contradictions, they did not take the shape ("if shape it could be called which shape had

none") of an incongruous jumble, but of a consistent system of inconsistency.

Multiplied as were his points of strength, Reginald Beltravers had a weakness to match every one of them. He was the most radical and levelling of politicians, yet the most aristocratic and *noli-me-tangere* of men. He was the most careful and profound of thinkers, and the most calm and cool of reasoners, yet the most inept of actors in the affairs of life. He loved human nature with the love of an ardent poet, and an enlightened philosopher, yet hated or despised every man, woman, and child of which it is made up. Proud as Lucifer, he nevertheless paid court to the meanest and most vulgar, for a smile or a sigh—a good word, or the suppression of a bad one. Of all the noble qualities of his mind, his eloquence was the most noble; yet he could not utter two extempore phrases *viva voce*, without boggling or taking breath. To the burning enthusiasm of a

youthful poet he joined the cold severity of a world-wearied anchorite. There never was a more thorough man of the world, in the most worldly (but not the vulgar) sense of the phrase; yet was he at the mercy of every impulse; eager as a child—passionate as a woman—fickle as fire—light as air—unstable as water.

But we are fain to break off in the middle of our sketch, lest the reader charge with being out of nature, a likeness of one of the most natural persons in the habitable world.

XII.

THE LADY PENTHEA.

Of all the shallow profundities of this most profoundly shallow age, commend us to the ignorant blunder which holds that, because there is more of falsehood and artificiality than there ever was before in human society, there is, therefore, less of truth and nature—

less of poetry and passion. Will anybody show us, in the records of the dark ages, as they are called—ages when human society was pretty much what nature made it, only more savage,—when might and right were avowedly one,—when law was the will of the strongest,—will anybody pretend to point out to us, in the domestic history of those ages—the ages, par excellence, of Romance—anything half so strangely romantic as the events which occur under our cognizance every day we live, and the passions and actions that grow out of them? The heavens, forsooth, have ceased to be poetical, since Herschell discovered some of their sublime secrets, and made them "familiar as household words!"

This is not the mistake of poets, but the cant of prosers. No,—it is not ignorance, but knowledge, which engenders and elevates and spiritualizes that Romance which is ever the prevailing characteristic of our nature, under

its highest and purest condition of intellectual developement. Precisely in the ratio that we advance in true intellectual civilization, do we rise above the common-places of "this visible diurnal sphere," and breathe and have our being in the empyrean of Romance and Poetry.

Art thou yawning over our philosophy, good reader? Be it so!—but arouse thee at our living illustration of it, in the person of that "Dark Ladyée," who, statue-like, sits alone yonder, in the "dim religious light" of that embayed and painted window of the ante-library, seeming, by her attitude, to be gazing forth upon the glories of the fairy landscape without; but in reality, while her bodily sense is blind to all around, her mental vision is fixed, with a fatal pertinacity, on her own strange and sad destiny—more sad, more strange, than that of the most ideal heroine of the wildest romance.

From her cradle to the present hour the Lady Penthea has been lapped in all the

luxuries, and pillowed amid all the splendours, that appertain to (and constitute) the highest grade of artificial life. And what have they made her? Doubtless one of those embroidered common-places of which her sphere is so full—one of those elegant incarnations of insipidity and indifference conjoined, which have made English aristocratic life in the nineteenth century the laughing stock of Europe. Alas, for the Lady Penthea, that it is not so! They have made her, or at least helped to make her, a creature more embued with the spirit and essence of Romance, than any period but one of ultra-civilization could have produced.

If we could dare to record the "strange eventful history" of this child of passion and poetry, it would perchance put to shame all the fictions that are to follow, of our own illuminati.

> But this eternal blazon may not be,
> To ears of flesh and blood!

—at least to the long ones which we must be content to look for among those very "gentle" readers who (we are told) form the staple of a modern romancer's auditory.

As however it is probable that the Lady Penthea will play a part in our future drama, we are bound to describe her.

Yet who shall fitly describe the Lady Penthea?—she of the desolate soul—the seared spirit—the blighted, the broken heart;—yet moving on, amidst the brilliant frivolities, the inane nothingness, the dazzling falsehoods, of fashionable life,—like her in the old Drama, who, in her mortal agony, kept whirling round and round in the mazes of the court dance, while successive messengers whispered tidings in her ear that turned her heart into stone! Like her, the Lady Penthea moved through the giddy dance of fashionable life, with a worse ill within her breast than the fire-tortured victims in the Hell of Vathek—moved proudly, nay, serenely on, weakly de-

serted by her own sex, basely denounced by ours; a doomed, yet an "undying" one still!

Bright and beautiful in early youth as a houri of the Eastern paradise; soft and soul-entrancing as the priestess of a Hindu temple; yet with the intellect and the passion of a De Staël; the Lady Penthea was married, in early life,—(say not that *she married*, for it was not her doing—), to a man who fancied that he loved her, (for who could look upon her and not so fancy?) but who in reality loved and could love nothing, but his humour, his ease, and his dinner;—to a man whom *she* never even fancied that she loved. (This was her only error;—call it a crime if you will; for it was an act which almost merited the punishment it met with.) So wedded, she had passed through the glittering vulgarities of the great world, even to the day when we now look upon her, a being ALONE;—despising those she smiled upon; feared and hated by

those who smiled upon her; with no companion but her imagination, no friend but her pride, no refuge but her pen, no confidant but that great public which she despised still more, (and, in her case, more justly,) than the small one among which she moved.

In a word, the Lady Penthea was the Byron of her sex, without any of Byron's intellectual errors and deficiencies; with as much of Byron's poetical powers as any woman can possess without ceasing to *be* one; and no touch of his personal littleness and weakness.

Ask not what business the Lady Penthea has in such a company as this in which we now meet her. She was and is the life and soul, the crowning ornament, the noblest flower in the Corinthian capital of that society, which seems, for the time-being, to call back some touch and tone of that spirit of life which expired within her when she yielded up her outraged fame to those most

remorseless of all furies, the scandal-mongers of May-fair.

Nevertheless she still haunts those scenes; moving among them apart and alone, like the sainted Margaret amid the insane devilry of the Hartz Mountains; as pure in heart as she, as passionless (now); as seeming cold; as dead to all around;—yet *un*like her, "with a fire in her heart and a fire in her brain;" quenchless,—for it is fanned for ever by the immortal breath of ideal love; unconsuming,—for it is fed by fuel not of the earth's growth.

XIII.

SIR PROTEUS PLUME.

The Lady Penthea, as she sits apart and self-absorbed, is addressed by a person whose appearance may puzzle the most accomplished physiognomist,—so entirely does he wear the aspect, and seem destined to

play the part, of an embodied negation. And it is by negatives alone that we shall attempt to describe him. Sir Proteus Plume (so is he called) is certainly not a genius; for he dresses, and moves, and thinks, and speaks, and acts, like a gentleman. He is certainly not a "gentleman;" for he has been seen walking the streets arm in arm with a genius in dilapidated attire. He is not a literary lion; for nobody flatters him to his face, and reviles him behind his back. He is not a fashionable poet; for he does not get people into corners, and practise his last sonnet upon them. He is not a fashionable reviewer; for people do not get *him* into corners, and worm puffs out of him for themselves or their *protegés*. He is not a politician; for while he believes that a great many of the leading Whigs are knaves, he is far from disbelieving that not a few of the leading Tories are fools. He is not a wit; for he never sacrifices a friend that he loves, to

win the smile of a fool that he despises. He is not a philosopher; for he never immolates truth upon the altar of a theory. He is not——

READER, (*somewhat impatiently,*) "Enough! —you have already told us that he is not anything,—a negation."

Pardon us, gentlest of objectors. We told you no such thing;—only that, from his outward seeming, he may chance to be mistaken for one. But as you are evidently weary of hearing what he is *not*, and as it does not consort with our present purpose to tell you what he *is*, we will only add that behind that brow of marble, and those features, motionless and (*while* motionless) expressionless as a mask, there lies an intellect fraught with all pure thoughts and noble aspirations, and fashioned into shapes of almost ideal perfection; and within that cold, rigid, statue-like form there couches a heart, so gentle that it melts at an infant's tears, yet so strong that it

would not quail at a nation's cry, if wrongfully raised against him; so capacious that it compasses in its folds the entire human race, yet of such contractile power that the few friends ("two or one") who are admitted within its inner shrine, feel as if they alone occupied and filled the temple.

XIV.

THE BOY POET.

Observe the youth who is seated in the deep recess of yonder window, withdrawn and apart from all that brilliant company,—unknowing, for the moment, of everything in the wide world but his own thoughts, and unknowing even of them, but as faint and vague echoes and reflections of those *feelings* which make up the sum of a boy-poet's life and soul. See! his lithe, fragile form is bending over a book, that is spread open on

his knees,—his head drooping towards it like a plucked flower. The pale face is resting on he clasped hand,—over which, and all round the small exquisitely modelled head, fall heavy waves of auburn hair, concealing all but one pale cheek—pale and cold as marble, but smooth and soft as a girl's.

Dead to all the brilliant nothings that are passing around him, the boy-poet has fallen upon some passage of his (just at present) sole idol in the temple of poetry, Milton, and is either lapped in the Elysium of its divine music, or lost in the mazes of its marvellous imagery, or transfixed by the flaming sword of its majestic eloquence.

Strange, you say, to meet a mere school-boy in so accomplished a circle as that which now graces the gilded halls of Chatsworth. But though *in* this goodly company, he is not *of* it. Thus it is:—our excellent host, who loved him for his father's sake, had invited him hither, to run wild, for the rest of the sunshiny

season, among the lovely lawns and groves and glades and pastures of this fair domain; hoping thereby to recruit that shattered health which he will presently so need, in his life-and-death-struggle for those University honours on which (poor boy!) he is about to stake his soul and body.

In the mean time, the last change that has come over the spirit of the boy-dreamer is one that threatens to wake him into that everlasting dream which, when it once takes possession of the soul, holds it captive for life. Last year he owned no mistresses but the exact sciences; admitted of no virtue or verity but what resolved itself into "the loves of the triangles;" and had very nearly squared the circle! The year before, he had dived so far into the heart and mystery of Matter, that the Philosopher's stone was within his mind's grasp, and the Elixir Vitæ was a thing more than "probable to thinking." The year before that, Art was his

only idolatry—a marble statue, or a canvass Madonna, his only "beauteous and sublime of human life."—At present, as we have hinted, he is a poet. We would not swear that next year he will not be a person of sound common sense; the year after that, a debater at the Cambridge Union; the year afterwards, a Senior Wrangler; and—

Oh, most lame and impotent conclusion!

he will in all human probability signalize his arrival at "years of discretion," by a Tory harangue from a popular hustings, or a Whig article in the Edinburgh Review!

We have said that Milton was, for the moment, the sole idol of our boy-poet. But even Milton he regarded, not as a poet, but only as the nearest practical approach to the great poetical archetype existing in his own mind; and, if he worshipped him, it was *as* an idol, not as a god. Compared with all other poets (so called) he regarded Milton as

a demi-god compared with mere men. But tried by the test of the poetry born of his own dreams, Milton himself "came tardy off."

We have said, also, that just at present he was a poet. But it was in feeling and aspiration only, not in act. He thought of poetry as of a thing so utterly ethereal, and of the mind, that he scarcely regarded it *in esse* at all—only *in posse*; a thing to be created, or educed out of created things, in the fulness of time, but not as yet a living entity—a faith, not a fact—an aspiration of

> The prophetic soul
> Of the wide world, dreaming on things to come;

not an accomplished purpose. He believed in it, as he believed in the ultimate perfectibility of man, and that they would come together—or rather, that each would necessarily bring or include the other. He looked upon Plato as the nearest to a poet of any human being that ever lived;—partly because he never *wrote* a line of poetry; but chiefly

because he excluded poets (so called) from his ideal of a Republic: for our boy-poet held that all *written* poetry, even the highest and purest, does but lower and debase, rather than exalt and refine, that idea of THE POET, which he believed in, as he believed in the idea of the Godhead—both being conceptions incapable of expression by words, or even by thoughts—only of being *felt*. Poetry was to him not merely "a light that never was on sea or land," but a light that never was at all;—a thing TO BE: "the all-hail hereafter!" the great problem of human nature,—not to be solved, but in the immortal courts of Heaven.

Our boy-dreamer believed that if any writer of recent times had obtained glimpses of what poetry is, and had succeeded in putting them into words, it was Wordsworth; and *he* only in his "Ode on Immortality."

> Not naked, or alone,
> But trailing clouds of glory, do we come,
> From God, who is our home!
> Heav'n lies about us *in our infancy*.

Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing boy;
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows
He sees it in his joy.

This, he thought, went nearer to solve the problem of poetry than anything else that man had ever put into words: and he reverenced Wordsworth accordingly. But Wordsworth's writings in general he looked upon as something very like an antagonism to Poetry—an Egotism, instead of an Idealism—the petty thoughts and feelings and associations of an *individual* man, as opposed to the one great conception of our human nature, as emanating from, and existing in, its Creator.

Consistently with this idea, if he had been called upon to embody Poetry in effigy, through the medium of Painting or Sculpture, he would have given it a form, not of Apollonian beauty, and immortal youth, but of immortal *infancy*—the *face* alone of a sleeping infant—sleeping,—but dreaming;—an infant's

face in the sky, dreaming, amidst those "clouds of glory" which its Creator had breathed about it, and which the first touch of earth would melt and dissipate.

By all this the staid and judicious reader will gather that our boy-poet had reached that most trying period of an enthusiast's existence,—the moment when the visions of youth have passed away, and the realities of manhood have not come into view. And there for the present we must leave him.

XV.

A SLIGHT MISTAKE.

Reader. "But your hero and heroine? pray accept our impatience as a compliment: but where be your hero and heroine? These marvellously clever people that you have introduced to us,—these new illuminati,—are all very well for one of Lady Bethnal-Green's

menagerie meetings: but you have not brought us to Chatsworth, of all places in the world—Chatsworth,—the very Parthenon among the temples in which Fashion is worshipped—you have not brought us hither to meet boy-poets, Byron ladies, geniuses who are not gentlemen, and gentlemen who are neither one thing nor another. We are in the heart of your first volume, and yet appear to be considerably further from encountering the personages proper to a 'fashionable novel' than when we joined you in your opening chapter."

Pardon us, gentles! There has been some mistake. A fashionable novel? Why it is precisely because, at the period to which our records refer, fashionable novels had grown into the Aaron's rod of prose fiction, and were swallowing up all the rest—it is precisely this which gave occasion to the scenes and circumstances presently to be recorded. And yet you are looking for a fashionable novel at our hands!

Really, the mistake is none of ours; and we can but proceed in our appointed course. Thus much however we can promise,—that, should the illuminati (any or all of them) who claim your attentive ear on the present occasion, fail to obtain it on the point of "form" (which is by no means improbable), they pledge themselves, through us, their humble amanuensis, never to trouble you any more, unless under the shape that you delight to honour;—for, "being reasonable," they cannot dispute that readers are to the full as essential a condition to a book fulfilling its end as writers are, and therefore have a right to "a voice potential" in the matter.

In the mean time, as the next best thing to seeing one's friends honoured is to hear them abused, you may perchance like to stay and listen to the uncivil things said against your favourite reading, by the illuminati assembled in the library at Chatsworth on the occasion in question, and learn what happened in consequence.

XVI.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

"The thing may be explained in three words, as most other things may, if one would but take the trouble," said Mr. Tressyllian Toms oracularly, to the little circle who had gathered round him in the library at Chatsworth, on the evening we have chosen for the opening of our records. "Nay, it explains itself;—it stands rubric on the title-page of every prose fiction of the day."

"In the title-page? As how?" inquired Reginald Beltravers, who laid down the book he had been seeming to read, and languidly joined the little coterie.

"Why," replied Toms, "be their grade, subject, object, design, material, author, or publisher, what they may, do they not all agree in placarding themselves—'in three volumes'?"

"But what harm is there in three volumes?" asked Beltravers, drily.

"None," replied Toms, "any more than there is good, in that, or in any other particular number. If therefore you ask, Why *not* three volumes? I reply, *Why* three volumes?"

"Well," said Beltravers, "for my part I think three is the only perfect number—in Novels as in everything else."

"So do I," said Toms, patronisingly, "when *you* adopt it;—because, having determined to write three volumes, you write them. But the rest of the tribe, having but one to write, insist on writing it into three; and for this reason forsooth—that publishers will have it so! Thus, all the good (and it is not a little) that has been done during the last hundred years by transferring the patronage of literature from lords to publishers, has been more than *un*done by their vile invention of this Procrustes bed for prose fiction."

"May one ask," said Sir Proteus quietly, addressing Toms, "what is your specific quarrel with 'three volumes?' What is it that you charge them with in particular? I am not going to take their part: but the form of publication assumed by the Scotch Novels, may at least claim to be accused in terms capable of being replied to. That Mr. Tressyllian Toms does not like that form of composition, is, I admit, *prima facie* evidence against it; but to lack his good opinion is not a legal crime."

"If it were," exclaimed Beltravers, "the Lord Chancellor help the writing community! —for they'd every man of them be in a premunire—and the women too. If you want his good word, you must die for it. But Sir Proteus is quite right, Toms; and so, I'm afraid, are you—only you like to be right all to yourself, and so will not set others right."

"Not in this case, at all events," said Toms: "to prove which, I'll make a bargain with

you. I'll prove to you, as clear as that three times one does *not* always make three, that the three-volume system of prose fiction is the most pestilent literary invention of modern times; provided, when so proved, you'll promise to help me in putting it down."

"Easier said than done," observed Sir Proteus.

"No," rejoined Toms, "as easily done as said, in a case like this, where the fashion to be abolished has arisen out of an accidental, not an inherent quality, in the thing to which it is applied;—like the laurel crown invented by Cæsar to conceal his baldness; or the Emperor Hadrian's revival of beards, to mask an ugly mark in his own face; or the Chinese Empress Takeya's decree against the use of feet by her female subjects, because she had a club one; or the monstrous ruff of Elizabeth's time, invented to hide an aristocratic wen."

"But," asked Beltravers, "could such a system as that which you describe have main-

tained itself to the present day, by anything short of a miracle?"

"No," responded Toms, triumphantly, "by nothing but one of those miracles which genius alone can bring about. Need I tell you that, just as three-volume-novel-writing had grown effete, and was sinking into a bye-word of contempt and ridicule, the greatest genius of modern times willed to lift the art from the slough of obloquy into which it was on the point of falling, to a height and dignity that no one but himself had ever dreamed of its attaining. He willed to do this —and he did it. He found the art on a level with the lowest grade of penny-a-lining, and he lifted it to an eminence only just below that of Epic poetry. But I'm afraid the world will have little cause to thank him for the feat, even taking into account all the delight it has gathered from the means by which he brought it about:—for the decrepit and superannuated patient on which the operation was per-

formed, instead of being rejuvenated and radically cured of its complicated ills, by the new blood thus infused into its veins, did but gain thereby a new lease of its old and dilapidated life, and a new locality in which to drone and drivel out its lengthened span. The prodigious and deserved success of the Scotch novels has but changed the venue of the offence of three-volume-novel-writing, from the common-places of daily life to the common-places of history; and the offenders, instead of filching the raw materials of their manufacture from their friends and acquaintance, lay hands on them as they find them, ready made up for use, in books of (so called) history. And I don't know whether, of the two, it is not a more mischievous act, to falsify historical facts and characters, than to misinterpret those of ordinary life: for in one case the world has an instinct to go by, such as it is; but in the other it must perforce depend on books, and believe what they tell it. And the result in

the present case is, that the readers of historical novels take their notions of an historical personage or period from directly opposite representations of them in novels, and (like the people who read the Edinburgh and Quarterly on the same book) *believe both!*"

Mr. Toms's hearers being fairly astonished into silence by this unlooked-for outbreak, he, after taking breath for a few moments, was left at liberty to resume his tirade.

"And do you suppose that true fame—such for instance, as you, Beltravers, aspire to—is to be achieved by such means as go to the making of a modern circulating-library fiction? —You need not—as I see you are going to do —instance such names as those of Cervantes and Fielding, for I shall not admit them to be cases in point. The *Don Quixotte* is not a fiction at all, in the sense in question;—it is a comic prose poem—a better sort of Hudibras; —it is the noblest satire that ever was written, because the freest from ill-will towards

the things satirized. Still less are the (so called) novels of Fielding fit to be described as fictions; for they embody the concentrated spirit of the truth of an entire social era."

"But *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver?*" interposed Sir Proteus, inquiringly,—"I suppose you will allow *them* to rank as fictions: and *they* have achieved fame enough."

"Yes," responded Toms, "but have left their authors without it, in the popular application of the term. And it is much the same with the noble comic Epic of the Spaniard; there are thousands of readers of *Don Quixotte* who never knew, nor desired to know, by whom it was written; and not one in a hundred of the readers of *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver* ever heard of Defoe or Swift. *This* is true fame:—whereas a mere NAME,—like that, for instance, which Byron will be fifty years hence,—is but the shadow of it."

"Then you admit that both name and fame *may* be acquired by means of a prose fiction?" asked Beltravers.

"Yes; but it required a Scott to accomplish it; and it was done, not *by means* of the form of composition he chose to adopt, but *in spite* of it."

It was so unusual for Mr. Toms, when once he began an harangue, to "pause for a reply," that though he evidently did so on the present occasion, his hearers showed no immediate disposition to interpose. Indeed it was clear that he had inclined them rather to consider than to controvert this new crotchet (for so they nevertheless thought it) which had so suddenly taken possession of him. After a brief pause, however, Sir Proteus, as if desirous that the discussion might not drop, observed,—

"But let me again, my dear Toms, call you back to the question I took the liberty of asking just now. What is your specific charge against the only Muse we moderns have to our back? What 'ignorant sin' has the lady committed, that—"

"What committed?" echoed Toms, ab-

ruptly interrupting the placid inquirer, and blazing forth, as he spoke, into a degree of earnestness, and even vehemence, strangely at variance with the subdued tone usually heard within those halls of fashionable indifference;—

"What committed?—Has she not, by her meretricious blandishments, and the easy price at which she bestows her favours, banished the simplicity and purity of the olden time from out the land? To drop the nonsensical metaphor into which you have entrapped me, has not the system I complain of abolished that once indispensable compact, between scholarship and authorship, which can alone preserve the offspring of the latter from becoming a bane rather than a blessing to a civilized community?

"Besides, who will labour, when to play brings more profit, and as much (present) honour? To write a perfect prose tale of passion and character, is nearly as difficult a task,

and one almost as rarely performed, (I am not sure it may not be deemed as high an effort of intellectual power, and I *am* sure it may be turned to as high and noble moral purposes,) as to write a perfect tragedy. And was there ever such a tale written, of greater length than a few score pages? I do not believe it. I have never seen one, ancient or modern. It was never even attempted by the only story-tellers who have carried the art to a high pitch of perfection—the Arabian and the Italian ones. Nay, I do not believe it to be in the nature of things; any more than it is possible (and for the same reasons) to expand a tragedy beyond those limits to which the theory and practice of the greatest of human geniuses, confirmed by the settled award of time, have assigned it. Indeed, there is, and can be, no *essential* difference between a consummate drama and a consummate story,—no difference essentially affecting the results on the reader, or the circumstances on which those results

depend: I speak, of course, of a single and coherent narrative of a single and connected series of events, having some specific moral end in view, (whether exhibited or not,) and seeking that end by the collateral means of seizing the attention of the reader or spectator for a certain space of time, and during that time lifting his mind, and its affections and interests, above the ordinary pitch at which the realities of life hold it down under ordinary circumstances. That elevated tone of mind which is indispensable even to the comprehending, much more to the duly appreciating, a consummate tragedy, cannot be maintained beyond an extremely short period; and the limits of that period have been finally determined by the experience of ages. And precisely the same reasons apply in the case of a narrative fiction, as of a dramatic one,—the necessary differences between the two being in form merely. So true is this, that there can be no drama that may not, with

competent skill, be put into a narrative form, without materially affecting any of its results but the dramatic ones;—and no narrative that may not be 'dramatised,' without losing any of the qualities by which it affects the reader, except that merely accessory and unimportant one which it derives from its peculiar form.

"It follows that a narrative which aims at the highest purposes of prose fiction should be subjected to the same critical rules, in regard to unity of design, moral purpose, and practical length, which may be looked upon as finally settled, in the case of tragedy, by the joint consent of all accepted critics of all ages, and the practice of all the dramatic poets from whom those critics have drawn their rules. Each composition should occupy about the same space of time in the reading: a greater space than that occupied by a five-act tragedy being incompatible with the continuance of that condition of mind in the reader which is essential to the moral results

aimed at; and a less space being insufficient to the production of any permanent results whatsoever."

XVII.

LITERARY REFORMERS.

It is difficult to guess how much longer Mr. Tressyllian Toms would have continued his harangue;—for to talk was, as we have said, a necessity of his nature, and when he found himself "i' the vein," to stop of his own accord was a thing as undreamt of in his philosophy as it is in that of a rail-road locomotive. To talk was his vocation; and the fulfilment of our vocation is a virtue which, like all others, brings its own reward: consequently, the number and quality of his hearers, or whether he had any hearers at all, was a matter of perfect indifference to him. In this he resembled that most transcendant of

modern talkers, (and of writers too for that matter,) Coleridge; who, to do Toms justice, was his only worthy rival in the art. But Coleridge's talk was appreciable only by an audience of angels;—consequently, if these great rivals in the art of holding-forth should meet in realms where we are assoiled from the earthy part of our nature, and retain nothing but the divine, the transcendentalist will beat his competitor utterly out of the field. In the mean time, Toms had decidedly the best of it here below; for his hearers could (sometimes) understand him.

They had evidently understood him, more or less, on the present occasion,—Beltravers in particular,—who took the opportunity of a momentary pause attendant on a huskiness in Toms's not very tractable voice, to observe,—

"By Jove, Toms, you talk this well; so well that I wish you would adjourn the question, and let us have a regular discussion of it to-morrow. To tell you the truth, I have long

had a notion of proving to the world that the condition of prose fiction in England (like everything else) is exactly the reverse of what it ought to be; though *what* it ought to be, I have not yet quite settled. But you have helped me a good way towards the mark—so far, indeed, that if we can, on discussing the question again to-morrow, agree on two or three important collateral points, I'll offer you a share in a pet project of my own, which, if it do not 'reform altogether' the delinquencies of modern book-making, ought to do so;—which, to you and me, will be the same thing. What say you?"

"Before Mr. Toms says anything," interposed Lady Bab Brilliant, "allow me to claim a share in your discussion, and your project, too, if it likes me: for I, too, have a very pretty theory about prose fiction, and only want somebody to keep me in countenance, to work it out. Suppose we issue a manifesto,—or, still better, a manifestation,—or, best of all,

both—(given under our hands and seals, from the Palace of Chatsworth—there's nothing like the *prestige* of a name, to overawe that most presumptuous of pusillanimities, the public—) at once decreeing and demonstrating the principles upon which prose fiction should and shall henceforth be conducted. I like that notion of Mr. Toms' vastly, about limiting a tale to the length of a tragedy: only for 'Tragedy' I must be allowed to read 'Comedy.'"

To do Mr. Toms justice, he was not a little surprised at the turn things seemed to have taken. To produce any practical results by his talk, was what he never dreamed of. His talk, like that of lovers, was an end, not a means. Give him but one solitary listener; one, or a whole theatre full; a *tête-à-tête* at the Athenæum, or a Call of the House,—it was all one to him; he would talk you

> From morn to noon, from noon to dewy eve,
> A summer's day;

barring meals,—at which he was always profoundly silent,—from an instinctive sagacity, which told him that the two most important operations of life cannot be efficiently performed by the same organ at the same time: a forgetfulness of which is constantly spoiling the best dinners and the best discussions in town.

The thread of his discourse on the present occasion being prematurely cut, as above related, and the caoutchouc character of the material causing the ends to recede from one another, so as to preclude piecing, he readily acceded to the suggestion of Beltravers, and the party separated, till their re-union in the music-room; all bestowing themselves as their respective tempers prompted, during the half hour of twilight which the close of the evening had still left them.

Mr. Toms, for instance, betook himself to a solitary saunter in the noble wood backing the Palace; there to practise, upon the "green-robed senators" of the same, the exordium of

his next speech—on the state of political liberty in Crim Tartary, or the last improvements in Cotton Twist,—he had not determined which.

Beltravers and Sir Proteus paired off, as if in earnest converse on the adjourned question, whether the product of one multiplied by three is not in certain cases considerably less than before the process of multiplication.

The Lady Bab Brilliant,—who never could discover the use of walking, except as a means of reaching one's carriage,—bestowed herself on a chaise-longue near one of the superb western windows overlooking the Derwent; there to watch the beautiful lights of evening, as they melted into one another, and weave them into some pretty fancy for her next copy of Album verses.

The Lady Penthea, and the Boy-poet, (who had evidently taken a liking to each other,) wandered together into the outer Park, to explore some of those lovely nooks, down on the river's brink, where, hidden from all sights

and sounds but the lapsing water and the whispering leaves, the young enthusiast was wont to dream of that "to-morrow" which even his school days had taught him was destined to "come never."

The lesser lights of the party, not being likely to figure in our future pages, we leave to that privacy which can in no case be invaded without blame, except where it is voluntarily put off: an axiom, by-the-bye, which must be received, once for all, in explanation of what may by some readers be regarded as an undue omission from our pages, of the distinguished person to whom (virtually) they owe their birth. If the princely and accomplished host of Chatsworth finds no place in these records, it is because those general claims upon him *as* a host, which he always so scrupulously fulfils, prevented him from taking part in those particular discussions, and their results, with which alone these pages concern themselves.

XVIII.

PROJECTS AND PROMISES.

The persons of our Chatsworth party who took a particular interest in the question so unexpectedly raised by the oration of Mr. Tressyllian Toms, found themselves assembled earlier than usual on the following day, —no one being present, however, but those who seemed disposed to take a personal part in it; namely, the particular individuals who, in virtue of the prophetic spirit of our office, we have already placed before the reader, as especially concerned in these pages.

Mr. Tressyllian Toms was, as usual, the last to arrive and the first to begin talking. He had scarcely introduced his person within the door of the music-room, where they had agreed to assemble, than, with the said door in his hand, he began what was evidently the

preface to one of his interminable harangues. This sending his voice in advance of him, as it were, was one of his methods of securing the ear of the company, before anybody else could have time to obtain it, after the momentary pause which the entrance of every new comer occasions.

"That project of yours, Lady Bab,"—he began, in a half polite, half patronizing tone, "is really worth consideration, and I have been thinking——"

"So have I, Mr. Toms," interrupted Lady Bab, in that vivacious and rather decisive tone of voice which she always adopted when she had made up her mind to be heard; on which occasions even Mr. Toms himself, if he was not transformed into that (to him) anomalous character, a listener, at least ceased to insist on having all the talk to himself.—"So have I been thinking,—(you smile—but I *do* think, sometimes,—) and I always find thinking a process much too troublesome to perform without

fee or reward; so that, when I do think, it is always to some specific purpose: and with me,

> The flighty purpose never is o'ertook
> Unless the deed go with it:

and the deed *shall* go with it on the present occasion;—so listen and perpend. While Watson was arranging my hair this morning, I matured a plan which, if the present company will help me to carry it into execution, will some day or other immortalize all of us,—for a month at least; and what is better, will amuse us for a week in the mean time. This is my plan:—you, Mr. Toms, shall write a fifty-page article, (*àpropos de bottes*) in the Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews respectively, (I'm told you are the only person whose politics has secured you the *grandes* and *petites entrées* of both,) proving and decreeing that, thenceforth and for ever, a legitimate prose Tale can and shall take no more time in the reading than a five-act play; and that to construct such a Tale with per-

feet success, on the true principles of Art, is to the full as high an achievement as a perfect Tragedy. In the interim, the present company shall be preparing an (unconscious) exemplification of our friend's theory; and the enunciation of the problem, and its solution, shall be so timed, as to come upon the hitherto-benighted public like a *coup-de-main*, and fairly surprise them into acquiescence. 'The bold thunder' shall, with its eloquent grumbling, arouse their astonished wits into attention; and the brilliant lightning shall follow on its heel, to flash conviction."

Mr. Reginald Beltravers, who had been listening with more attention than its playful tone seemed to claim, to the foregoing rattle of Lady Bab, here observed:—

"Nothing like genius for putting new ideas into one's head, (often without knowing or intending it,) and nothing like female wit for working up the raw material into an available form! Here have Plume and I been 'cud-

gelling our brains' fruitlessly, ever since Toms's tirade of yesterday, to hit upon some expedient for preventing his eloquence from being lost upon the world—and lo! the whole matter is managed in the untwisting of a curl-paper!"

"But will Lady Bab take part in her own enterprise?" asked Sir Proteus doubtingly; "for we shall need to have the problem solved by at least half a dozen different processes, before we can hope to see it accepted as the settled critical authority on which Tales shall in future be constructed."

"Take part in it!" exclaimed Lady Bab. "Why, so determined am I to see my project carried into effect, that I mean to execute it single-handed, if none of you grave signors will aid and abet me."

"But I am afraid, after all," said Beltravers, "there is more than two words to this bargain. I have been thinking over the matter seriously since last night, and I am

satisfied that Toms is as right in some points as he is wrong in others. That a prose Tale of passion and character, if pitched in the right key, kept to the right length, and its materials duly adapted to the purposes in view, *may* be made as effective in its results as a high Tragedy, I verily believe. But then the materials themselves,—the passion, the character, and the incident,—must be precisely those suited for a high Tragedy. Nay,—I do not think that the desired results can be attained even in this latter case, unless, while parting with the dramatic effects which can only be gained by that form of composition, we avail ourselves to the utmost of those narrative effects which are peculiar to *that* form. Moreover,—to make up still further for the absence of that intensity of effect which can only be gained by the dramatic form, the use of dialogue must be resorted to, whenever the narrative will not be injuriously arrested by it; and to compensate for the

loss of that elevation of tone and step which is obtained by the use of the tragic cothurnus, the utmost possible care and pains must be bestowed upon the style,—which must be made to produce *physical* results equivalent to those obtained by verse, without for a moment departing from the simple march of prose.—In short——"

"'In short,'"—interposed Lady Bab, gaily, "if people would but put as much talent, or genius, or both, into a prose Tale of a hundred pages long, as it would take to make a first-rate Tragedy, and employ as much time and trouble on them into the bargain, they might chance to produce as good a thing!—Like the critic in *Rasselas*, you would endow your *possible* tale-writer with an assemblage of attributes not extant together beneath the moon, and thus smother my project in its own virtues! But your arguments have determined me to try the simple attire of the olden time nevertheless: for if

I cannot make up for the homeliness of the fashion by the value of the materials, or the beauty of the form they cover, I will at least not any longer assist in the pantomime trick of passing off so many bundles of Monmouth Street finery, and second-hand French *fripperie* from the Dudevant *fabrique*, for so many bona-fide ladies and gentlemen,—much less honest men and women."

"And will you, Toms," inquired Sir Proteus, "instead of telling us how tales should in future be written, *show* us? As to Beltravers, he *must* do so if others do, to preserve his charter, of doing everything better than everybody else. And I'll guarantee him that he may do it with perfect safety to the fee-simple of his estate in three-volume-noveldom: for (not to mention sundry reasons which his modesty might object to hear) the weeds in question, having once taken root in the garden of literature, are of too rank and rampant a growth to be wholly eradicated;

especially while the owners of the garden (who pay for its cultivation, and therefore have a right to be consulted) persist in mistaking the weeds for flowers."

"Rather say," observed Beltravers, "that the weeds *are* flowers, to those who think them so: the only essential difference between the two being that fragrance which asks an acquired sense to entertain it. I will," added he, "try to raise one of your highly-scented exotics for Lady Bab's flower-show, nevertheless; though I by no means pledge myself not to return to the cultivation of those daisies and buttercups which, I cannot help thinking, are not to be wholly despised, while they afford pleasure to the millions who have no means of access to the Horticultural Gardens of literature."

"Well," said Lady Bab, graciously,—"so you will *do* it, we care not for the why or wherefore; since it ensures success to our enterprise. And what says Mr. Toms?" added she. "He

will not, I hope, after talking us into the Quixotism of writing what, according to his account, nobody will publish, and if they would, nobody will read, leave us to find our way out of the scrape as we best can."

"Oh!" cried Beltravers, "Toms has left off writing since he took to talking. He does not like dividing his triumphs, even with himself. Though I don't very well see how we are to do without him: for it is clear that this projected crusade of ours against the heathenism of three volumes must, for the nonce, take the very form it aims to abolish, or nobody will have anything to say to it."

"Well, have with you then!" exclaimed Mr. Toms; "for I like fighting people with their own weapons. True it will, in this case, be very like trying to find the way to heaven by a pious fraud. But the alternative savours of 'the other place;' where 'good intentions' are said to go but very little way, except as 'pavement.'"

"So be it, then!" said Beltravers, decisively. 'Let us contribute, each after his kind, a Tale, of that particular length stipulated by Toms as the only one at which a Tale can with propriety unfold itself; let this new Decameron go forth to the world under a Chatsworth safe-conduct; and let the proceeds be applied to found a Chatsworth Scholarship at Cambridge, for the best Annual Essay to prove that a part may be greater than the whole."

XIX.

EXPLANATORY.

Within a week from the period at which our last chapter closes, the chief of our Chatsworth illuminati had each signified to the rest the completion of a Tale, constructed on the one principle (in regard to quantity) which had been admitted, more or less, by them all, as indispensable to the intellectual

and moral results sought to be obtained in the class of composition which had been discussed between them: each at the same time vehemently deprecating any idea that they claimed the merit of having hit the high mark, in other respects, at which each confessed to have aimed.

We shall spare the reader all participation in the superfluous modesty which was thrown away on this occasion. But it would not be doing the respective writers of these Romances that justice which they look for at our hands, as faithful chroniclers of their "sayings" no less than of their "doings," if we did not add a few words, as to what they themselves do, and what they do not, profess to have attempted and accomplished.

First, then, as to the generic term they have chosen to apply to the Tales. They are "Romances," in the strictest sense of that much-abused term;—meaning thereby, a narration which, without in any particular depart-

ing from the *natural*, appeals to the Imagination, rather than to the Reason or the Belief; and which purposely adopts a tone of sentiment, and a depth and force of passion, as little springing from, and ministering to, the ordinary business of ordinary life, as does "the stuff that dreams are made of;" but which as surely "denotes a foregone conclusion" as do those dreams themselves. The most unimaginative of readers cannot mistake these Romances for *true* stories: nevertheless, their writers are willing to admit, that in proportion as they fail to impress the reader with a sense of their *truth*, in that precise proportion have they failed to attain the only legitimate end of such productions.

It should further be noted that, in order to place themselves on a fair level with each other in regard to subject, it was expressly agreed between them, to repudiate all "personal themes,"—except in Wordsworth's very unusual sense of that phrase. In other words,

they chose to forego all the adventitious advantages arising from the prestige of historical or classical associations on the one hand, and those more potent ones still which are born of the individual sympathy induced by personal associations on the other. In these Romances the reader will meet with none of the Antonies and Cleopatras of his school or college days; still less with any of the individual Thomsons or Johnsons of his personal acquaintance in the actual world; he will not even encounter a single "local habitation" that ever crossed him in reality or in books —scarcely a "name" that he ever associated with any *actual* human being.

If therefore the reader is not of a temper to sympathize with human beings, merely *as such*, he will find little to move or gratify him in these Romances.

Further;—the writers of these Tales desire it may be noted, that although the same reason which directed their choice of subjects, in

some degree induced the uniform adoption of that bare simplicity of *style* in which their lucubrations are attired, they were chiefly directed to this choice by their determination that these Tales shall please, if at all, by virtue of their intrinsic qualities alone: for they hold that, in compositions of this nature, the charms of mere style may be made to hide all errors, and fill up all deficiencies—that, like the art of dress in women, which levels all ranks and distinctions of personal beauty, style may, (and for the most does in the present day,) go far either to veil or to supersede all other merits.

As it has been admitted on all hands, in the foregoing consultations, that the disease in question can only be combatted with a reasonable hope of success on the homœopathic principle, of "like cures like," it became a question of no little difficulty with our critical doctors, which among them, if either, should undertake the unthankful office of

putting the needful medicaments into the required form. Each was willing enough to furnish a portion of the *simples* which they believed to be alone capable of restoring the patient to a "safe and pristine health:" but which of them would condescend to the office of gilding the pills, or otherwise disguising the proffered medicaments into that palatable form in which alone the patient can at present be expected to take them?

How this difficulty has been got over, the reader may learn (if he can) at the Dispensary in Great Marlborough Street. In the mean time, it is to be expressly understood that the physicians themselves are in no degree answerable for the vehicle in which their medicines are now administered.

Finally, it must be explained that, in consenting that their Chatsworth lucubrations shall see "the light of common day," our illuminati have expressly stipulated against being publicly identified with their respec-

tive contingents to this crusade against the barbarians and infidels who at present hold possession of the holy places of English prose fiction. Like the Knights Errant of old, they choose to fight with their visors down; and it is not for us to gainsay their good pleasure. Whether they may be induced to lift them in the event of victory, remains to be seen. In the by-no-means impossible alternative, of defeat, they will certainly remain to the end of time as profound a mystery as the Man in the Iron Mask.

This resolution considerably lightens the remainder of our task, by enabling us so to curtail of their somewhat "*un*fair proportions" the discussions which intervened between the reading of each Tale, as merely to indicate the substance of what each writer thought it necessary to premise, explanatory of the peculiar nature, subject, &c., of his or her respective contribution.

In pursuance of this duty we have to point

out that some of the incidents in the following Tale require it to be especially borne in mind that, at the remote and semi-barbarous period to which the narrative refers, a Vow, solemnly and voluntarily pronounced, was held to be so absolutely binding on the person pronouncing it, that no considerations or consequences, human or divine, were deemed a sufficient bar to its fulfilment, provided the conditions were fulfilled on which it was founded.

Other portions of the Tale require that the reader should be reminded, that, although none of the great leading truths of physics, connected with the movements of the heavenly bodies, and their influences on the earth, and on one another, were absolutely *known* at the period in question, much less recorded in books, many of them had been, for century after century, floating about the world, the waifs and strays of (so called) science, to be seized upon, and again lost or abandoned, from time to time, for lack of those intellec-

tual qualities and appliances necessary to their establishment and transmission as recognised truths. It was not till many centuries afterwards, when the courage, the intellect, and the knowledge of a Galileo, met together in one and the same individual, that they were fairly demonstrated, and made part of the actual belief of mankind.

THE THREE VOWS.

THE THREE VOWS.

PART I.

Chapter I.

On the northern coast of ancient Armorica, (since called Brittany,) there dwelt a lady, of noble birth, named Dorigen. She was the last of an illustrious house; and being endowed with extraordinary beauty, great wealth, every feminine virtue, and those endearing qualities of manner and of mind which are still more resistless than these in the eyes of the other sex, several of the greatest lords of the country had long been suitors for her hand.

But they sued in vain: the Lady Dorigen treated all with respect who deserved it at her hands, but none with marked distinction: her whole time and thoughts, as well as the vast produce of her lands, seemed to be divided between those acts of charity and of courtesy which she felt that her station imposed on her as duties, though she performed them as if her own gratification was all that hung on their fulfilment.

Scarcely a week passed that the castle of the Lady Dorigen was not the scene of some stately and noble festivity, of which all were in turn invited to partake, whose condition made it consistent with the customs of the times that they should be received as the guests and companions of one who traced her lineage through the best blood of the land. Yet all who were so received were treated by the Lady Dorigen as if no distinctions of birth or station existed.

Among the most constant attendants at these

festivities was a young man, of knightly birth, named Arviragus. He was of noble person, and descended of English blood; but poor in estate, and withal so little gifted with a sense of his own claims to female favour, that he for some time scarcely dared to think of the Lady Dorigen in any other light than as a being on whom he was permitted to gaze in silent admiration, as on some divine incentive to thoughts of virtue and deeds of nobleness.

And this, and no other, was the Lady Dorigen to Arviragus, for a long period; until he had acquired a settled habit of so dressing his mind and moulding his actions by the opinions and sentiments of this lady, that he came at last to feel as if there were no other criterion of goodness or of honour.

The reverent respect which Arviragus had thus cultivated for the Lady Dorigen was so deep and engrossing, that it did not allow him at first to entertain the possibility, much less to encourage the growth, of any feelings of a

less deferential nature. And even if he had permitted himself to entertain the thought whether or not he did or could dare to *love* such a being, the repeated refusals the Lady Dorigen had given to the suits of several of the most honourable, approved, and wealthy nobles of the land, had so effectually put aside all hope of a return of his passion, that, being of a calm, steadfast, and self-possessed spirit, he was content to live quietly on, performing all the noble and generous actions that occasion permitted him, and attributing them all, in his own mind, to the divine influence which she exercised within him; but in no case performing them with a direct view to her approval or knowledge.

The exalted character which Arviragus was thus silently and almost unconsciously acquiring, for the most chivalrous valour, generosity, and self-devotion, was not lost upon Dorigen. As intellectual qualifications, and their moral results, were the only ones which reached her

feelings in her intercourse with those about her, so they were the only ones which exacted from her any external marks of particular distinction and regard. Accordingly, since the growing character of Arviragus for every knightly virtue had become fully known to her, she had never failed to receive him with marked kindness and respect.

One or two of the noble actions of Arviragus, which had come to the knowledge of Dorigen, were of a nature to call for their particular mention in his presence;—and this had given her occasion to speak of them before him; which she did with such a sweet frankness, and unchecked warmth of expression, that, though he was the last of all those who heard her words who could have attributed them to anything like a personal sentiment towards himself, yet he could not but feel that the almost awful distance and difference he had been accustomed to consider as existing between them, was thus in some degree les-

sened; and from that moment Arviragus began to look upon the Lady Dorigen, as at least of a kindred nature with himself: which, until then, his reverential admiration—bordering on something like adoration—had almost prevented him from doing.

The spell of her wondrous beauty, and the atmosphere of intellectual superiority which the youthful and enthusiastic imagination of Arviragus had cast around the object of his admiration, being thus broken through by the nearer and more familiar intercourse which now subsisted between them, he immediately perceived that he had long loved this lady with the entire devotion of his heart and mind; and he began to encourage thoughts, at least, if not hopes, of obtaining her favour. And as the ardent warmth of his nature was no less active, when aroused, than the power which he possessed of controlling and directing its course to wise and honourable ends, he soon determined on at least offering her

the homage of his love; though he felt that he could only bring himself to do this in the same spirit in which he would bow before the gods, and should look for and accept the event, whatever it might be, with the same trusting and reverent patience with which he would await their answers to his prayers.

In brief, Arviragus sued to the lady Dorigen, and laid his humble affection at her feet; and almost as much to his surprise as delight, he was at once accepted by her, with that noble and frank sincerity which became her character, but which all but himself were disposed to attribute to a long-cherished passion for him;—nothing else being sufficient to account, in the eyes of the world, for her repeated refusals of suitors who were so much nearer to herself in rank and station.

But the world was wrong in its conjectures,—as it ever is when they spring from envy and ill-nature. The Lady Dorigen did *not* love Arviragus, till she felt a perfect assurance that *he* loved *her*. But when she did feel this, the

knowledge at once added all that was wanting to complete the impression which his noble character and person, and the devoted respect he had always shown towards her, had produced; and what the natural delicacy of her character would never have permitted, under other circumstances, to have amounted to more than an admiring and tender esteem, became instantly, and to ordinary observers unaccountably, changed into a passionate affection.

A courtship (if such it could be called) like that which now subsisted between Dorigen and Arviragus, and the various changes of feeling and modifications of character which it produced on the parties engaged in it, are not matters that can be fitly described in words; nor does the progress of our Tale require them to be so described. Suffice it that in due time the marriage was celebrated with all becoming festivities; and Arviragus was duly installed as lord of the Lady Dorigen's great wealth, and the happy possessor of her heart and person.

It must here be noted, that, before the mar-

riage ceremony was performed, Arviragus had made a formal and solemn Vow, and sworn to it on the faith of his honour and his knighthood, that though, according to the customs of the world, his own station, and that of his beloved lady, required him to receive from her, on their union, the nominal surrender of her will, and the seeming controul over her actions and her state, yet no circumstances should ever induce him to assert these (so called) rights, acquired by his marriage with her; that he would never seek to bias her will, or controul her thoughts or actions, in the smallest particular; that, on the contrary, he would ever bear himself as her humble and devoted lover and servant, and never cease to acknowledge that immeasurable superiority, both of intellect and of virtue, which had first called forth his admiring duty towards her: in short, that as he looked upon her as the immediate creator and inspirer of all the good that was in him, and of all that which alone had enabled him to find favour in her sight, he

would never cease to treat her as his superior in all things, and would ever subject his will and his judgment to the fiat of her's.

Chapter II.

The married bliss of two such lovers as Arviragus and Dorigen may not be told; except that it was as perfect as the fulfilment of every wish, and the performance of every duty, could make it. And thus it continued for more than two years.

At about the end of that time, matters of import required the presence of Arviragus in England, and threatened to detain him there for a considerable period; and after due preparation, he departed, leaving his Dorigen, for the first hour since their happy union, alone.

There are lovers who fancy that no pains are so bitter as those of absence. There are others —and such an one was the Lady Dorigen—

who feel that absence is the next best state to that actual presence which precedes and follows it. For Dorigen, the person alone of her Arviragus was absent; his spirit and his love were ever present, and she could commune with them as intelligibly and distinctly as if her lips had formed her thoughts and feelings into words, and *his* lips were there to answer them.

Still it must not be supposed that Dorigen's state was not very different from what it had hitherto been, or from that which she had ever expected it to be. But if it was less enviable in most things, in some she even felt that her lord's absence was a blessing to her; and chiefly so, as it enabled her to cast, as it were, at a distance from her, their past bliss, and thus contemplate it as an object apart from herself, and even look upon it as if it were a visible thing.

That the current, and even the character, of Dorigen's feelings were at first entirely changed

by the departure of her lord, was evident by the change which showed itself in her air and mien. But a grave face may cover as happy thoughts as a smiling one, and silence is often a more eloquent exponent of a satisfied heart than many words. Almost the only difference between Dorigen's bliss when her beloved husband was present with her, and that which she now enjoyed, was, that the one was active and nearly unconscious, and spread itself out over all that contributed to make up the daily beauty of her life; steeping it all in the perpetual light of cheerfulness;—while the other was almost wholly contemplative, and seemed to emanate from other things, instead of communicating itself *to* them. When her lord was with her, she had nothing to do but feel and enjoy the perfect bliss of her portion, and feel it doubled in his; and this filled her face with smiles, and made her heart grow garrulous, and overflow to her lips in gay talk. But now that he was away, she was perpetually *thinking* of him, and

letting her feelings yearn towards him in the unknown distance where he was dwelling; and the certain hope of his return became the almost sole point of her contemplation. Over this she brooded, in blissful silence, as the dove broods, day by day and night after night, over the embryo offspring that lie under her breast, and that she is no less secure of possessing at the appointed hour than if she already felt them move beneath her, and heard their first feeble cries.

But though the absence of her husband did not greatly diminish the happiness of Dorigen, it entirely changed the habits of her life for the time. She no longer made her castle the scene of gay festivities, and mixed but little with the world, except so far as her ever-active charities called upon her to do. These she performed with her own hand, as heretofore; but she passed the rest of her time in either wandering alone among the beautiful woods and gardens in the midst of which their habitation was

situated, or in sitting at home, in her now favourite chamber overlooking the sea at that particular spot where her husband's bark had quitted the shore, and where she, at no very distant period, was to look for its return.

But there was one thing which, if it did not at first actually disturb, did at least interfere with, the otherwise contented and happy temper of mind which Dorigen preserved during the absence of her beloved lord. And though it amounted to little more than a fancy, and though Dorigen herself knew this, yet it did not affect her the less on that account, but perhaps even the more.

The coast on which their castle stood was a very dangerous one for large vessels to approach during a storm; and immediately in front of the castle were several rocks and breakers, always more or less in sight, on which many vessels had been wrecked.

Now, though Dorigen knew perfectly well that the little voyage which her husband would

have to perform, from the coast of Albion, might and would be so arranged, (as to the season of the year, the nature of the vessel, and the like,) as to avoid almost the possibility of any danger that might be connected with the objects before her, yet the perpetual presence of those objects, and the knowledge that they *had been* fatal, came very soon to act upon her imagination, in a way that surprised and almost vexed, while it seriously troubled her.

The Lady Dorigen was anything but weak, and what the stronger sex are pleased to call "womanish," in her fears, on any subject, much less on one where everything called upon her to exercise the fine good-sense which was one of the chief ornaments of her character. And yet she could by no means prevent herself from every now and then exclaiming, as she sat alone at her favourite window overlooking the sea towards the English coast,—

"Oh! those rocks!—those everlasting rocks! would they were away! Not that I have any

fears!" she would continue, in a voice which was not without some slight indications belying the words it uttered.

"Fears!" she would repeat, after a pause, and with an expression which seemed to say,—"as if anything *could* happen, to part my lord and me!"

And she smiled away the thought, almost contemptuously, as if it were a sort of folly or impiety to have permitted it even to pass across her mind.

"But still those rocks," she would go on musing to herself,—"they are there always,—always there,—in sunshine or in cloud, in calm or in storm, day nor night, they never disappear! If the tide did but cover and hide them once a day, I should not so much heed them; for I could then choose *that* time for looking across the waters, to where he is. But now, I cannot turn my face towards *him*, but I must look on *them*, threatening him away, as it were, with their stony faces;—for

there is no denying that they do threaten, though they cannot hurt him. How they deform the beautiful, smooth surface of the sea! just rising up above it, as if merely to break its bright uniformity. I wonder I never used to observe that before. Would to heaven they were away! I even dream about them sometimes!—But how foolish is this!" she would add, after a pause: and when she reached this point, she would rise hastily, and breathe away those shadows of her fears, and presently lose the memory of them in other scenes.

But still those fancies would return upon her every day, when she saw the objects which had first called them up: till at last, finding that they were seldom absent long from her thoughts, and were becoming a real trouble to her, she wisely determined on at once getting rid of them, though at the price of her favourite walk upon the terrace looking on the sea, and her favourite apartment above it.

Chapter III.

Arviragus had now been absent several weeks; and the neighbouring nobles of the country, finding that Dorigen led so recluse a life, and fancying, from the almost pensive gravity of her mien and manner, that she was much less happy during her husband's absence than she really was, sought by various means to amuse her thoughts: for she was universally esteemed and beloved among them, and the respectful admiration with which everybody regarded her, had increased rather than diminished since her so happy union with Arviragus. To this end they seemed to vie with each other in preparing fêtes and festivities of various kinds, to which Dorigen was always invited, and at which she had, latterly, seldom refused to be present.

One of the most constant guests at these

festivities was a young noble named Aurelius. He had, in early youth, been an intimate friend and associate of Arviragus, who greatly esteemed his frank and noble nature; but their intimacy had been early broken off, by the departure of Aurelius for foreign travel.

Aurelius was now possessed of a good estate, a fine person, graceful manners, great and varied accomplishments, and a generous and honourable disposition; and all these had united together in rendering him, since his arrival at man's estate, one of the most happy and happy-making of human beings.

It was shortly after the departure of Arviragus for England, that Aurelius returned to his estate in Armorica, after a lengthened sojourn in foreign lands. Till then he had never seen the Lady Dorigen; but he no sooner looked upon her than he conceived a passion for her which nothing could controul—not even the certainty he very soon felt, of her absolute devotion to her husband.

Still that devotion, added to the perfect respect which soon became blended with Aurelius's passion for Dorigen, prevented him for a long while from even thinking of making known his feelings; a forbearance which, it must be confessed, nothing else—not even his boyish friendship for her husband Arviragus—could have preserved in him, but the evident and entire pre-occupation of the lady's heart and mind: for with all his honourable and generous feelings in regard to either sex, Aurelius was young, he had Gallic blood in his veins, and he was deeply in love. To abstain therefore from at least essaying his fortunes, would, under other circumstances, not have come within the scope of his gay philosophy.

In the present case, however, he saw at once that the matter was absolutely hopeless; and he confessed to himself that it ought to be so. But the confession went to his very heart as he made it; and it seemed to settle there, as if for ever, into a sentiment of bitter and

almost insupportable disappointment, when he reflected that, but for certain idle delays of a few days or weeks, at this or that city, on his return home from travel, it might have been otherwise: for he soon learned the history of Arviragus's brief courtship, and was not enough skilled in the subtleties of love to suppose (what not even Dorigen herself was aware of) that her affection for her lord had sprung into *being* at least, if not into *life*, at the very first instant her eyes met his; and that it had been secretly gathering strength, day by day, up to the very hour in which his declaration of a similar passion for her had enabled it at once to know and to assert itself in her heart.

Aurelius therefore gave up all hope of obtaining the love of the Lady Dorigen: even the long absence of her husband did not tempt him to take any steps towards it, or to even hint at the existence of his passion for her.

But Aurelius did not the less seek the

society of the Lady Dorigen; and as his manner towards her was always marked by the most respectful devotion, and was in all other particulars acceptable and agreeable to her, she sought rather than shunned him, on those occasions when they met at the castles of the neighbouring nobles.

The innocent frankness of Dorigen's behaviour during her intercourse with Aurelius in the absence of her husband, was so entirely free from all tinge of coquetry, that while it afforded him those opportunities of seeing and conversing with her which were now the sole solace of his life, it took away from him even the shadow of a hope that his love could ever be returned, and at last threw his ardent and active mind into a condition which made it prey upon his body, till that in return re-acted upon his spirits, and he gradually became an utterly altered being,—as if some strange mental disease had taken possession of him.

But though everybody observed and la-

mented, and most of all Dorigen, the change which had lately taken place in the spirits and appearance of Aurelius, yet no one—and least of all the lady herself—for a moment divined, or even suspected, the cause. It is true that Aurelius, when he and Dorigen happened to be at a little distance from the rest of the guests in whose company they met, would sometimes gaze silently upon her face, with an appealing and piteous expression, till the tears came into his eyes, and rolled unnoticed by himself down his (now) thin, pale cheeks. And then he would suddenly start, and turn himself away, and seem to summon back his wandering thoughts, and address her on some indifferent topic,—as if absence of mind had caused a momentary forgetfulness of where and what he was.

It was on one of these occasions, on a sweet evening in the early summer time, when Aurelius had been attending Dorigen in one of those walks which she was so fond of taking,

through the retired parts of the gardens of a neighbouring castle, that he thus found himself gazing at her for some time silently, and thus started, and then seemed to collect himself, when he observed that she was taking particular notice of his appearance.

In fact Dorigen had long remarked a something in the look and manner of Aurelius, which, though it was quite inexplicable to her, gave her real uneasiness; for she had latterly, and particularly since the evident failing of his health and spirits, come to feel a friendly interest in Aurelius, which the charm of his merely external qualities, and even his many graceful accomplishments, had not been able before to excite in her. The truth is, that, while she saw him well and happy, it had seemed to her that he was sufficient to himself. But now that he evidently needed sympathy, she did not wait to know if he sought it from her, but was as anxious to offer it to him, and to know the cause of his malady, (if there was one,) as she

had formerly been indifferent to him, in any other light than as an agreeable companion. And when, on the occasion just alluded to, she perceived the strong emotion which agitated his countenance as he looked upon her, and the sudden attempt to suppress it when he found that it was observed, she at once addressed him, with a show of sincere interest in her manner, and a touching gentleness in her voice, which, while they charmed his feelings into a momentary calm, as if some magical talisman had been waved over him, did but act the part of an insidious opiate, administered to a patient whose very disease has been brought on by indulging in such dangerous remedies: they soothed his feelings into an artificial stillness for a moment, only to disturb and trouble them tenfold for the time to come.

"Aurelius," she said, "I have long observed that something troubles you; something too of serious import it must be, for its effects are more and more evident every time I see you."

She waited to hear if he made any reply, or showed any reluctance to the matter, whatever it was, being thus plainly referred to. But as he remained silent, she continued to speak; though she did not fail to observe the sudden, and, to her, the inexplicable change, that passed over his face, the moment he perceived the subject on which she was addressing him.

"I am sure I need not tell you, Aurelius," she continued, "that no idle curiosity prompts me to inquire into the nature of your griefs—if you have them. But I have been much indebted to your friendly and delicate attentions to me, during my husband's absence. And besides, that absence has taught me what trouble is—which I scarcely knew before, but by name; and the knowledge has made me more quick to see the troubles of others, and more anxious to help to do them away."

Aurelius was still silent, though his face grew paler, and his lips trembled slightly as she spoke. Perhaps she did not look at him

intently enough to observe this; or if she did, it did not prevent her from proceeding, as he showed no sign of wishing to avoid the conference that she had thus frankly began.

"Aurelius"—so she went on—"you have no sister or mother to tell your sorrows to, if any are upon you; and I do not observe that you cultivate any close friendship or intimacy among your own sex. And yet, we are not well alone, even in our joys. I scarcely felt this once;—but then I made friends of my youthful spirits; and my happy fortunes enabled me to create sympathies towards me, wherever I went, and to indulge my own in their most romantic wants. And this stood me in stead of that communion of thought and of feeling which, since I have enjoyed it, I could not live for long without.—I am afraid," she continued after a pause, "that you will think I am making a very long speech to you, and without any very intelligible end. But what I was going to say was—that—that——"

Here she hesitated a little, as if to *choose* the words in which she should express herself: for though it did not for an instant occur to her that any wrong interpretation could be put on what she felt to be the mere result of an involuntary kindness of heart, yet that sense of propriety and delicacy which is an instinct in the female mind, whispered her to beware. Attending to the warning, without being conscious of it, she went on.

"I was going to say that I am sure, if my husband were here, he would think that you need at least the offer of a friendly hand and tongue, to help you to bear, or get rid of, the unhappiness that (you do not deny) presses so heavily upon you. And thinking this, he would, I am sure, make you that offer as frankly as he would wish you to refuse it if it would be of no avail. As he is *not* here, let *me* make it for him. Is there anything we can do to do you good?—I say we," she added, smiling—"for he and I are one, you know, and in his absence I am lord and lady too."

They had continued walking, side by side, as Dorigen spoke; otherwise she could not have failed to observe the intense emotion that agitated the countenance of Aurelius, and shook his frame, as he listened to her words. But when she ceased speaking, and waited for his reply, she stood still, and turning towards him, looked in his face.

It was pale as marble; and though no tears were upon it, it was wet all over with the strong internal efforts he had been making, to restrain his feelings till she should cease to speak.

When she did so, he let his face drop for a moment into his hands; then lifted up his head suddenly, as if a desperate resolution had come to him;—and looking upon her with an expression that affected, while it almost terrified her, he exclaimed, in loud and broken accents, and pausing between every few words—"Lady, you *can* do me good! *you* can, and no one else!—I must speak or die! I have tried to be silent, and I have been so, almost at the price of my

life. But it will not be, any longer. Those words and looks and tones of yours have burst open anew the flood-gates of my heart, and I feel that it is drowning—now—even now —in the depths of its unmitigable love! Love, lady!—love!—that it is that troubles, that consumes me."

He paused, and Dorigen looked at him with increasing pity and emotion,—but she did not in the smallest degree perceive the import of his words.

"It is love!" he cried out suddenly, and with renewed vehemence. Then he added, in a broken and subdued voice—"Help me, or I die;"—and he stretched his arms towards her beseechingly, and melted away into a childish passion of tears, and fell on his knees at her feet.

Still she did not understand him; for in the deep simplicity of her heart she had never for an instant contemplated the possibility of herself being the object of a guilty passion. So she

endeavoured to raise Aurelius from the ground; and she almost smiled as she said to him,—

"Love?—nay, is *that* your grief?"

For it had never once occurred to her that love could bring with it anything but bliss. Then, as she looked at him, and saw the fatal marks of misery that were upon him, she continued, in a different tone—

"But you said that I could help you. What need, then, was there of all this (I must now think) overstrained sorrow?"

Deep as the conviction of Aurelius had been that there was no shade of coquetry in the freedom of intercourse which Dorigen had lately permitted him, and almost seemed to encourage, he was utterly at a loss in what sense to take these last words, and the manner and look with which they were spoken. She could not, he thought, have mistaken the meaning of *his* words,—for, in the desperation of his feelings, he had even intended to be as explicit as a free confession of the cause of his

griefs could make him:—or rather he felt that, whether he intended it or not, he had been so, and that it was now too late for concealment. And as to her openly contemning and scorning an avowal which her own words had wrung from him after so long and fatal a silence,—that, he could still less suspect her of doing.

These thoughts, as they passed through his mind, and perplexed it between vain conclusions, stayed the sense of his sorrows for a brief space, bitter as they were. But as he looked at her, they presently returned with renewed force, and he again abandoned himself to them, as if nothing that she had said since his desperate avowal of their cause had been heard or understood by him. Still kneeling at her feet, and holding the hand that she had extended to raise him, he went on with the passionate and half-involuntary confession of his love.

"Love, lady,—love is the disease that destroys me! I would fain have concealed it, till its consuming fires had worked their own cure.

But my heart is bursting with them, even now—now, as you look upon me! Oh,—those soft looks! Turn them away! I cannot live before them—they pierce, and pierce ——"

He writhed for a moment, as if beneath bodily agony,—and then, looking up to her face again, and pressing her hand convulsively between his, he exclaimed,—

"Pity me—help me!—love me—or I die!"

Dorigen too well understood Aurelius now; and, as he uttered these last words, she instinctively withdrew her hand from his grasp, and shrunk backward from him; and a rush of various feelings agitated her heart, and for a moment deprived her of speech. Astonishment, fear, anger, womanly pride, disappointed confidence, all contended together which should first express themselves; and all threw their dim shadows upon her face. But the next moment they all passed away of themselves—the realities and their images together—as the clouds pass across the sky, and their shadows

from the face of some clear lake that lies beneath;—leaving it clear and open as a bright unsullied mirror.

"Aurelius," said she, with an air of dignity blended with her softness, which he had never before seen her assume, and which, indeed, she never before *had* assumed to him, or to any one,—"Aurelius, need I beseech you to leave me? The words you have uttered would pain me—must I say how very deeply?—if it were only that they must put an end to the many pleasant hours we might have passed together;—but they pain me still more, when I think that you *could* bring yourself to utter them to me."

"Oh! pardon them, Lady!" he exclaimed, interrupting her.—"It was my great love that spoke—being greater than my will, that could not keep it silent."

She continued, in the same calm tone, and scarcely seeming to hear him.—"Not that I complain of them. They grieve and pain, but—

I will dare to say it—they do not offend me,—because I see that it was my own words which gave occasion to them. But they grieve me still more for this, in teaching me that we cannot even seek to help, without the danger of hurting one another. They teach me too"——

Here she suddenly stopped, as if recollecting that she was herself prolonging a conference which ought never to have taken place.

After a brief pause,—during which Aurelius continued to stand before her, silent, and looking upon the ground, as if utterly absorbed in his sorrows,—Dorigen merely added, "Farewell, Aurelius;" and she was turning away to depart.

But though Aurelius had scarcely heard her words, the import of these last seemed to reach him without the aid of his senses, and the thought of her leaving him thus, and for ever, (as he felt that their parting must now be,) made him once more lose all controul over his sorrows, and he exclaimed vehemently, yet with

a mixture of despairing weakness that seemed to shake his heart to pieces,—

"Stay, Lady! I conjure you, stay!—Is there no hope for me? Do not,—nay, *dare not* to leave me utterly without hope. I would fain not die while I can look upon you—upon that beauty for which alone I have lived since I beheld it. But without hope, the sight of it kills me."

Seeing that she was again turning from him to depart, he exclaimed, with a solemn earnestness which gave something awful to the sounds of his lorn voice,—

"Lady! I charge you do not leave me thus!—Look upon me, and speak to me,—or I will die here—now—at your feet."

And he felt for his sword, and was drawing it—still gazing fixedly upon her. But as she turned, and looked upon him again, piteously yet reproachfully, he dropped his hands, and stood silent and rebuked; and she once more addressed him, with more of sorrow than re-

sentment in her voice, but yet with a distant and dignified regret in her bearing, which sank into his heart, and seemed at once to sooth and to consume it.

"Aurelius, I need not tell you how I love my husband. All the world know it—for it is no less my pride than my delight. I must not say, neither, (for it might seem like boasting,) how he loves me, and how his happiness is bound up in that love. But let me say, that it was *his* commendations first made me see and know those generous qualities for which I so esteemed—nay,—let me not fear to say it—for which I still esteem you. He will shortly return; and shall he find you other than you were? And changed through——"

Here she stopped for a moment; and then, assuming a more cheerful tone, as if new thoughts had come to her, she continued,—

"Come, come!—we are both of us making more of this than it needs. You have been ill of late; and a sick body fills the head, and the

heart, too, with fancies not their own. Come," she continued, smiling upon him with a sweet frankness, and holding out her hand,—"Come, let us return to our friends. Be but yourself, and by the time my Arviragus returns, you will have thrown away this foolish heart-sickness, that would otherwise mar the brightness of the festivities with which we must greet him."

It should seem that Aurelius had been listening to Dorigen's voice merely, not to her words; for when she ceased to speak, he only started slightly, as if at the sudden absence of something which had been taken from him, and then he cried faintly,—

"Oh, again! again!—cease not! I know it is the syren's charm, whose sweetness is so fatal. But I can neither live nor die without it."

"Nay, then," said Dorigen,—and there was now something of severity mixed with the tone of sorrow in which she spoke,—"Nay, then, it is not as I thought. Aurelius, when my lord Arviragus returns, we may meet again. Till then, farewell."

And she turned away, and was hidden from his sight by some projecting foliage round which she passed, before he seemed to feel the meaning of her words.

But the instant he lost sight of her form, his reason seemed at once to resume, in a great measure, that controul which had kept him silent so long. The expressions of passion which had agitated and almost distorted his countenance passed away; and he followed Dorigen, and again addressed her, in a calm and self-possessed tone of voice, but with a mournful murmur in it, which told too plainly of the storm by which it had lately been agitated.

"Lady," said he, "I adjure you once more to hear me—once, and it may be for the last time. What I have said is said, and cannot be recalled. And being said, I know that I must quit you. But the words you have uttered, make me feel that I would fain still live, if it be but to think of them, and of the voice that breathed them forth. They seem to bind me,

with soft chains of music, to a life that were, else, worse than death. But without hope, I cannot live if I would. Without hope, my soul forsakes me. Without hope, the very reason which now enables me to address you calmly, bids me die. Give me hope, then, though it be but in empty sounds, that may soothe my miseries while they mock them. Tell me to do impossible things; and say that when I have done them you will love me.—Nay, look not so—I must speak the words, if I die in uttering them,—and what are they to you but words?—Bid me do things that have as yet been done only in thought; and say that, when done, you will love me, and will be to me, even as you are to your wedded lord: say this—only *say* it—and I will live upon the bare imagination, and trouble your sweet peace no more, till the impossible condition, whatever it be, is accomplished! Refuse this, and I swear, by the great gods who hear me, and by the godlike reason that now controuls and prompts me in

what I say, that I will die before your face—now—here—without more words!"

"Reason!" exclaimed Dorigen, as if purposely overlooking the desperate resolution which now seemed to possess him. "Reason! why this is madness, Aurelius—worse madness than that passion of which it has taken the place. And is it generous in you thus to try my womanish kindness? Come—no more of this! Let us part at once, and as friends."

"Say it, then," continued he; "say that I may hope, though that hope spring from despair itself. Say it, and I will live upon the bare sound! Bid me do something that never yet was done—I will not say something impossible;—for the very imagination of the promised reward will make me feel that nothing is impossible with that reward in view."

He kindled into new ardour at every word he spoke; the colour came into his pale and faded cheek, and burned there like a fire; and his eyes brightened and looked away into the

distance; and he seemed, for a few moments, entranced in a waking ecstasy of new and unthought-of bliss

At last, the kind and compassionate heart of Dorigen caught at this fanciful means of helping, and perchance curing, a mental malady which, it was clear to her, must prove a fatal one under unkind or injudicious treatment; and she at once determined to humour this new imagination, which had now evidently taken possession of Aurelius. So, after thinking for a few moments, she again addressed him, in a smiling tone, but with an expression from which everything like levity was excluded; —for she saw that the least appearance of trifling with his sorrows would defeat her newly-acquired hope of curing them.

"Well," said she, "I *will* give you something to do for me; and when you have done it, you shall yourself name the guerdon of your toil. You know those Rocks, that so deform the fair face of the waters in front of our castle.

Not a day passes but they trouble me. I cannot cast a look or thought from out my favourite chamber, towards the coast of Albion, where my beloved lord Arviragus sojourns, but *they* arrest my sight, and will not let it go, till they have filled my foolish fancy with fears, that vex me the more because I know them to be vain ones. Find some expedient, Aurelius, to take those frightful rocks from out my sight, but for one hour, and let me look abroad on the beautiful sea, a smooth unbroken mirror; and I will"—

She hesitated a moment, not at what she was about to say, but at the words she should say it in. But the next moment she thought to herself—nay, let me not spoil a kind deed by being over-nice about a word or two. And she went on,—"and I WILL LOVE YOU, EVEN AS I LOVE MY BELOVED LORD, ARVIRAGUS."

"Swear it!" exclaimed Aurelius, instantly catching at her words,—"Swear it!"

His eager voice and vehement gesture almost

terrified her for a moment; and she replied to his exclamation only by a slight motion of her head and hand, indicating that he should not ask more of her.

"Nay, lady," he continued, "I will not think you are mocking me. And if not, do not, for a word more or less, mar the boon you are bestowing on me." Then, he added, in a solemn voice,—"Vow, by the eternal gods who hear us, that if I do the thing you have said, you will love me, and be to me even as you are to your lord and husband. Swear it!"

"Well—I MAKE THE VOW," said she,—and she smiled as she said it, partly to dispel an involuntary feeling of something like superstitious fear, that came over her as she uttered the strange oath, and partly from an equally involuntary sense of the unmeaning importance that Aurelius seemed to attach to a few empty words.

"I am satisfied," said he with solemnity,

immediately she had uttered the last words.—"Now, lady, farewell! Till we meet again (if we *should* meet) think of me with pity and forbearance. Once more, farewell!"

And he sank upon his knee, and touching her hand, he bowed over it with an air and look of devotional respect; and then instantly departed.

PART II.

Chapter IV.

The course of our Tale must now carry us rapidly over an interval of about two years. During the whole of this period, the heart of Aurelius was kept alive within him, and his spirits active and afloat, by the strange hope that his desperate thoughts had created for him, out of the last words of Dorigen: for a hope he perpetually felt it to be, however fallacious or however remote.

On quitting her after the conference which has just been related, his soul-sickness seemed to pass away from him as if by magic, and with it the baneful influence it had so long been exercising over his physical powers; and he seemed suddenly to feel a new life infused throughout his frame, both mental and bodily. The weight of secret passion which had pressed

his soul into the dust, seemed at once taken away, by the disclosure which he had made of it, and at the same time he missed the almost deadly fear which he had hitherto entertained, of incurring Dorigen's hatred and contempt, whenever such a disclosure should happen.

But above all, the task which he had now set himself to perform, however impossible it might seem to his sober reason, was not so to his excited and romantic fancy; especially when he recollected the seemingly miraculous stories that were abroad, of the wonders performed by the Alchymists and Astrologers in different parts of the world, and of the unlimited powers which, it was said, mind might, under certain circumstances, acquire over matter.

In fine, Aurelius saw opened before him a prospect unto the future, the absence of which, and of the desire or the power to look into it, form one of the most fatal ills to which our human nature is subject. Thoughts and

aspirations, distinct from the hitherto absorbing passion of his soul, and the person of her who had excited it, now came thronging upon him; and they seemed to urge his mind into that active occupation, in the presence of which no very absorbing sentiment of evil can for long together keep possession of the human intellect.

Immediately on quitting the Lady Dorigen, Aurelius determined to prepare for his departure from Armorica. Whither he should bend his course in the first instance, seemed a matter almost of indifference to him. But as his reason had now enlisted itself with his passions, in the prosecution of the object which had taken entire possession of his soul, he clearly saw that he must steadily adapt his means to his end, if he would retain even the hope of accomplishing it. He therefore determined to seek out the reputed learned of the age, wherever they were to be found, and ascertain what assistance and encouragement he was likely to

meet with among them. Accordingly, he directed his steps to Paris, in the first instance; where he stayed for several months. From thence he travelled through Italy, visiting the principal seats of learning; and then returned, and passed into Germany.

It would be departing from the object of our Tale, to follow Aurelius in his strange search, or trace the progress of those various degrees of probable success or failure which seemed to him from time to time to attend it. It is sufficient for our purpose to state, that the various persons with whom he consulted, the experiments he witnessed, and the studies he entered into, had at least the effect of keeping alive within him the one hope by which alone he wished to hold his life in fee.

True, that hope seemed, ever and anon on the point of expiring. But it was as often raised to a pitch of the most confident assurance, that his object at least *might be* accomplished—

that it was not a physical impossibility. And these perpetual alternations, by keeping all his faculties on the stretch, prevented that total and indolent absorption of them all in the direct contemplation of *one* object, which was most to be dreaded for him, and which had in fact constituted the disease of which he was seeking the cure.

It should not be concealed, either, that the inquiries which Aurelius had lately been induced to make for himself, as well as the conferences he had obtained with many of the really wise and learned of the age, had opened to his view glimpses into the secrets of Nature, and the wondrous powers by which she works, in effecting even the most trifling operations of her will, which could not fail to create a lively interest within him, apart from that which grew out of a reference to the one great object of his soul.

All this together, was sufficient to keep

Aurelius unremitting in his pursuit, and to preserve his bodily, as well as his mental faculties, in a condition fitted to its prosecution.

Chapter V.

Meanwhile, affairs in Armorica resumed in a great measure their old course: for (in spite of the frightful Rocks) Arviragus returned safely, a few weeks after the departure of Aurelius, and found his Dorigen even sweeter in the slightly pensive cast that her beauty, both of mind and person, had acquired during his absence, than she was when he first wooed and won her. And they resumed their gay and festive courtesies; and all went on as before.

But still Dorigen was not the joyous creature that she had been, before the sad disclosure, made by Aurelius, of his guilty passion, and the strange result of that disclosure. At the first fit opportunity, she had related to Arviragus

her singular conference with Aurelius, and much of that which had preceded and led to it. But she had not informed him of its strange and wild conclusion: *why*, she scarcely knew. Certain it is, that, wild and fanciful as the request had been which drew the Vow from her, and utterly unmeaning and idle as she felt that Vow itself to be,—still there was no concealing from herself that it *was* a Vow; and that therefore, however made, or with whatever view, it was a solemn and a sacred thing—a thing which, she *now* felt, should not have been trifled with, however kind and generous the motive for so doing might have been.

Certain it is, too, that the Lady Dorigen never looked upon the Rocks on the sea-shore before her Castle, without feeling that a very singular change had taken place in their effects upon her: for they still affected her when she saw them, and their images still haunted her, almost as fearfully as they had done during the absence of her lord. *Now*, however, it was the

thought of their possible *absence* that moved her; and she could not even imagine the view of a flat, unbroken surface of waters, from her once favourite window, without an indistinct feeling of something like inward dread coming over her.

All this, however, must be considered as relating (in its full strength at least) chiefly to the first few months after her husband's return: for the continued absence of any tidings of Aurelius gradually lessened the power of these impressions, and at last wore them down to a sort of pensive regret for his sorrows and their cause,—coupled with a distinct and ever-conscious feeling of tender sympathy with her kind, when she reflected on the mysterious links that bind our human hearts to one another, and on the mingled folly and inhumanity of attempting to live in and for ourselves alone.

These feelings, if they made Dorigen a little less joyous than she was wont to be before she

had learned to recognise and dwell upon them, did not a whit diminish that inward sense of happiness which alone reaches to the depths of the heart.

Chapter VI.

It was nearly two years after the departure of Aurelius from Armorica, that he was one day walking alone, beneath the still and gloomy cloisters of the stately Palace of the Prince Bishops, in the ancient city of St. Hubert, in the Low Countries, when a young man, of a grave and steadfast aspect, yet gentle and graceful in his mien and bearing, and attired in the simple costume of a German Student, came up to him, and addressed him thus:—

"Will the Lord Aurelius permit a stranger to ask the purport of his solitary musings? Trust me, it is no idle or impertinent curiosity that prompts the enquiry. Or shall I divine

them?"—continued he, after waiting a few moments without receiving a reply. "They are, at least, not bound in by the limits of these venerable walls, nor even by the piles of antique learning and wisdom which are contained therein. If I mistake not, they are wandering among the untrodden Rocks that lift their heads above the else unbroken surface of the waters that wash the shores of distant Armorica."

At first, the words of the student scarcely broke the deep reverie in which Aurelius was absorbed. But this last portion of them roused him in an instant, and fixed his attention on the person who uttered them.

"I will not," continued the stranger, seeing that Aurelius did but gaze upon him with an air of silent surprise—"I will not, Sir, affect an ignorance which would be inconsistent with my purpose in thus addressing you. I have learned the object of your visit here; I know the utter want of success that has attended your pursuit

of that object elsewhere; I know that that object is, and ever will continue until its accomplishment, the sole and settled purpose of your life; and, briefly, I would fain, on certain conditions, aid you in its attainment."

There had been a time when words like these would have swelled the heart of Aurelius with a throng of eager hopes, or rather with *one* all-absorbing hope, which would have displaced for awhile every other feeling. But he had so often been led to indulge in dreams of this kind, which had been bred in him by the false promises of fraud, or folly, or enthusiasm, that he now listened but as one who may always be excited to a certain degree of attention, by naming the one theme which alone fills and occupies his thoughts.

"Who is it," said he calmly, but without anything like either indifference or distrust, "to whom I am indebted for taking a sufficient interest in my fate to enable him to penetrate

into my thoughts? for I will confess that you have divined the subject on which they were employed."

"I am an unknown Student," replied the stranger, "and would fain continue so, till I can achieve (if ever) what may at once deserve and gain me a name and fame."

"And what would you with me?" asked Aurelius.

"I repeat," replied the Student, "I would help you in your hitherto fruitless search after some means of performing the task set you by the lady of your love."

"And with what motive?" enquired Aurelius; "and how am I to believe that you, a nameless stranger, and so young too, should be able to help me in a task to which my own thoughts have been directed night and day for two long years in vain, and for which help I have sought and consulted (equally in vain) half the wise and learned of Europe?—a task," said Aurelius, mournfully, relapsing

once more into the reverie in which the Student had found him, "on which Nature herself seems to have set the seal of hopelessness."

"For my motive," replied the Student, "it must not be enquired into. Suffice it, on that head, that I ask nothing of you till the deed shall be accomplished. And for my means, they too must remain in my own keeping, at least till the event shall have proved their worth, or worthlessness. I think," continued he, "the task you seek to perform is, to make disappear from the surface of the sea all those Rocks which at present rise above it, within sight of a certain castle looking from the coast of Armorica to that of Albion."

"It is so, indeed," said Aurelius, with an air of sorrowful abstraction, which seemed to show that the words of the Student were producing little other effect on him than that of bringing the more vividly before his

mind's eye those images which were never wholly absent from it.

"And if," continued the Student, "you do this but for one day, nay—for one hour—your wishes will be accomplished?"

"Yes!" said Aurelius fervently, but still with the same abstracted air, and without directing his attention to the stranger; as if he was merely answering questions propounded by his own thoughts.

"One question more," continued the Student, "and I have done. Is there any limitation to your task, in respect of time? Will *any* day or hour serve for its performance?"

"Yes, any," replied Aurelius; and he almost smiled as he said it, and shook his head mournfully, as if he was thinking within himself how fallacious the hope was that was keeping him alive, and yet how utterly impossible it was for him to cast it off.

"Then," said the Student, without seeming to observe anything particular in the manner

of Aurelius, "if it should please you to meet me, towards the fall of evening, beneath the grove of pines that skirts the city westward, I may come prepared to tell you the day and hour at which I will, on certain conditions, enable you to see performed the task enjoined you."

And he immediately left Aurelius, without waiting a reply.

These last words of the unknown Student produced a very different effect on their hearer from those which had preceded them. He had hitherto listened to the youthful stranger merely as to one who spoke on the one theme to which all his thoughts tended, and whose words, therefore, whatever they might be, did not fall upon his ear either like empty sounds, or like troublesome impertinencies,—as all others did. But there was something so decided in the last few words of the Student, and in the quiet and unpretending, yet confident tone in which they were uttered, that they

at once took possession of his mind; and every moment, as he continued to reflect on them, they seemed to acquire added power over him: till at last, long before the time named by the the Student for their meeting, the vivid imagination of Aurelius had created for itself a new fabric of hope, that seemed to hide all the obstacles which stood in the way of his desires. Now, too, that the stranger was absent, Aurelius seemed to recollect that there was something in his look and manner which could not be coupled with deceit. And then, above all, he had promised positively to name the day and hour on which the great work might be accomplished: which was what no one had hitherto pretended to do.

This prospect, of having the very time fixed, as a specific, and, as it were, a *visible* point on which his hopes might rest and dwell, affected him more powerfully, and seemed to come more home to his feelings, than anything else; and he repaired to the appointed place of

meeting, filled with eager and anxious thoughts, which seemed to stir his mind into a healthful activity, which it had not for a long time experienced.

The anxious balancing of his newly-awakened hopes, against the host of desponding fears which had lately been gaining upon the heart of Aurelius; the restless and feverish agitation of spirits which this vain balancing of one set of uncertainties against another at last caused within him, as he paced impatiently beneath the solemn pine grove, waiting the Student's coming, and hearing, without marking it, the melancholy dirge that the dark old trees above his head seemed to sigh forth to the chill breeze that was passing through them; the blank misgiving that almost made him start, as the thought came over him that his griefs had perhaps been made the theme of some idle jest; the momentary rush of joy, (as if his hopes were actually on the point of their certain accomplishment,) when at last he saw

the figure of the Student coming towards him through the deep twilight (amounting almost to darkness) which had by this time wrapped the whole avenue where he was walking; and finally, the recurrence and reaction of his fears and doubts, when he who had promised to remove them stood fairly before him;—all these things, though not foreign to the purpose of our Tale, must not be dwelt on further.

Neither is it needful to relate in detail the conference which now took place between the Student and Aurelius. Suffice it to state that the former produced from his bosom a sealed paper, before presenting which to Aurelius, he exacted a promise from him, that it should not be opened till he arrived to within a certain distance of his home in Armorica, whither he enjoined his immediate return. He added, that Aurelius would find, within the paper, full directions as to the part which he would have to perform in the task, and also the day and

hour stated, at which he might look to see that task accomplished.

"There is one thing more," continued the Student, "which you must promise to observe, before I place this packet in your hands. It contains within it another sealed paper, on which is written simply the name and dwelling-place of the person who now addresses you. This paper you must promise me not to open till after the day named for the completion of the desired work; and moreover, not to open it *at all*, in case the work should *not* be completed on the day named. Nay—do not start. You will bear in mind that I have not yet positively assured you the work *will* be performed—nor shall I do so. It is my full and firm *belief* that it will be accomplished, and on the day and hour specified within this paper. But in seeking to aid you in your desires, I profess to work by human means alone. I strive to read the secret will of Nature, and to work in conformity with that will; but not to

controul it, still less the mightier will of that Power to which Nature herself, and all her works, are subservient. That the Rocks which rise from out the surface of the sea at a certain point of the northern coast of Armorica, will disappear beneath the waters, on the day and at the hour named within this paper, I feel a full assurance. And if they do, you are at liberty to learn who it is who has helped you to the knowledge that they *will* so disappear: for you may, if you please, regard *this* as the extent of your obligation to me. But if, from whatever cause, my knowledge should mislead me —(and you must ere this have learned that knowledge can sometimes mislead us no less— nay, even more—than ignorance itself)—all I ask, for my endeavour to serve you, is, that you will forget it was made."

"But," said Aurelius, as he took the paper, with a feeling of mysterious reverence not unmixed with his misgivings, and after having promised all that the Student required of him—

"But you have not yet named the price of your success."

"Oh," replied the Student, with a half smile upon his face, which Aurelius could not very well interpret, and into the meaning of which he was too much occupied with his own thoughts to feel either disposed or qualified to enquire very closely—"none but a lover must venture to put a price upon his lady's love. We will talk of that hereafter, if we should be destined to meet again. In any case I will not ask you to pay me more than a thousand pounds' weight of pure gold, for a secret which you have hitherto sought throughout Europe in vain!"

"Be it so, then!" said Aurelius instantly, and not seeming to notice the light and almost jesting expression which accompanied the Student's words. "I pledge my knightly word and Vow, that if this thing happen as you have said, a thousand pounds' weight of virgin gold shall be yours, if all my lands and goods can pur-

chase it. Is there aught else to be said or done?"

"Nothing," replied the Student, "but to join our hands upon the bargain, and to hope that we may meet again,—I, for my fame sake, more than for the wealth that is to follow it—you, for the sake of those unimagined joys that my secret toils will in that case have placed within your reach."

They then joined hands amid the almost total darkness that by this time enveloped the Pine Grove, and bidding each other a single "farewell," parted at once, and took their respective ways towards the city.

Chapter VII.

It need scarcely be told that Aurelius prepared for his immediate return to Armorica, in conformity with the injunctions of his unknown friend.

During his journey homeward, (at least till his near approach to the place at which the Student's packet was to be opened,) he felt as if his whole soul was hushed into a state of tranquil expectancy, which seemed to himself, when he thought upon it, utterly inconsistent with the complete suspense in which his hopes and fears as to the future hung balanced;—for the Student himself had not absolutely *promised* a favourable result to the enterprise.

The truth was, that the almost diseased activity and stress of mind which had perhaps caused the griefs of Aurelius in the first instance, and had certainly continued them in all their vigour up to the period of his last conference with the Student, had now, from the peculiar circumstances, both of hope and of fear, in which he was placed, almost entirely ceased, and his faculties were in a state of abeyance, which amounted almost to a suspension of their respective powers. His fears and his hopes—those opposing armies which

had so long been carrying on their active war within him—seemed to have mutually admitted a cessation of hostilities; and their victim was allowed for a brief space to enjoy a hollow truce, which the distracting conflicts he had so long been suffering under seemed to change, while it lasted, into a settled and soul-soothing peace, such as he had never expected again to experience.

But as Aurelius drew near to the spot at which he was to open the packet of the Student, and learn the share that he himself was to take in the performance of the great work, his hopes awoke from their brief slumber, and with them the fears which seemed to beset and accompany them everywhere, as the dark shadow accompanies the form which creates it. And when he found, on at last opening the packet, that all he had to do, towards bringing about the apparently miraculous effects which he sought to produce, was, to repeat, at certain periods, a few scarcely mysterious verses, which seemed to do

little more than express, in measured language, some of the wild thoughts that had often passed through his own heart and mind when pondering on the object of his desires, his misgivings began speedily to 'gain ground upon him, and he felt for a time that utter sinking and sickness of the heart which is worse to bear than the most active misery that fate can inflict on us.

But when again Aurelius reflected that the very day and hour were specified, at which he was to look for the accomplishment of his task, and that day not a distant one, his mind gradually resumed its lately restored tranquillity, and he felt as if he could now wait patiently for the great event.

The season was early spring, and the directions contained in the Student's packet were simply these—that Aurelius should arrange to reach the coast of Armorica a certain number of days before the vernal equinox, and should, at certain hours of each day, stand on the shore,

and repeat the verses inscribed on a tablet which formed part of the packet.

The hour at which Aurelius was to prepare the lady of his heart to expect the fulfilment of his task, was the noon of a certain day. But he was expressly directed to repeat the verses for the last time on the midnight preceding that day. And he was told to hope or fear, according to the omens which should then present themselves to him.

In brief, Aurelius arrived on the coast of Armorica at the time specified, but without making himself known to his friends; as he determined that unless the omens, named as likely to accompany the last repetition of the mystical verses, were favourable to his hopes, he would at once leave the spot, without waiting for the last hour, and without again exposing himself to the near influence of those charms from the almost fatal effects of which his late enquiries, and the mental occupation attendant on them, had in some degree relieved him.

Aurelius had hitherto fulfilled the directions of the Student, and the day of the night was now arrived, at the conclusion of which he was to expect an omen of his good or ill success on the morrow. And now it was that he first began to be fully sensible of the near approach of that hour on which his future fate depended. But though this feeling caused his fears and hopes to come thronging upon him more thickly than ever, yet he had lately acquired sufficient controul over himself to enable him to await the event of the night with something like patience; a patience, however, made up less of a longing desire for its arrival, than of a doubtful and lingering wish to retard the progress of those hours which brought it on. And when he saw, by the glass which stood beside him, the latter hours of the night passing by him, one by one, he wondered how it was that each one seemed to pass so quickly.

Behold Aurelius, at length, standing on the

seashore, at the approach of midnight, on a low cliff, which formed a sort of natural terrace in front of the castle of the Lady Dorigen. The full moon was hanging in the heavens above him, and steeping all the scene around in its mild beauty: thus creating a seeming union and correspondence between everything which he beheld—everything, except the Rocks which rose abruptly from out the smooth and glittering surface of the ocean, and which were so placed as to present only their shaded portions to his sight.

Aurelius stood for a moment looking upon those Rocks, and seeing little else of all the scene. He then turned for awhile, and gazed, with a tender intensity of feeling, which presently brought tears of something like bliss into his eyes, on the habitation of Dorigen. And oh, what thoughts and images coursed through his busy brain as those tears were falling!

How long he had been gazing thus he knew

not, when he was awakened from his luxurious dream of imaginary joy, by the sound of the castle bell striking the midnight hour. This reminded him of his task, and he turned at once towards the sea, with the mystical tablet in his hand, and the tears still standing in his eyes—when, lo! what did he behold, or seem to behold? The Rocks that he had but now looked upon, and observed to be in their usual places, and of their usual form and height, seemed totally altered in their appearance, and, (could he believe his senses?) they seemed to rise not half their usual height above the surface of the waters!

At first, Aurelius utterly disbelieved his senses, and seemed to feel as if he were under the influence of the waking dream from which the sound of the castle bell had just roused him. He closed his eyes, and pressed his hands upon them; and then, opening them again, and gazing forth fearfully, he still seemed to see the same objects, under the same aspect.

His heart swelled and beat till it almost stopped his breath, and he stood for a few moments looking at the sight before him, with every feature of his face, as well as every faculty of his mind, open, as it were, to absorb and drink in what he saw, or seemed to see;—for he could scarcely yet be sure that his senses did not deceive him.

Suddenly, Aurelius thought of his unperformed task, and of the omen that was to attend it; and he instantly addressed himself to his tablets, and pronounced the Invocation which was inscribed on them.

Spirits of the ocean, hear!
Ye who lift its loftiest waves,
Ye who stay their fierce career,
Listen in your twilight caves!

Spirits of the winged wind!
Ye who wake its wildest tones,
Ye whose wills its terrors bind,
Listen on your viewless thrones!

Spirits of the teeming earth!
Ye who feed its central fires,
Ye who tend its gentlest birth,
Listen from your mountain choirs!

Spirits of wind, and earth, and sea,
Mightiest, gentlest, each and all,
Wheresoe'er your dwellings be,
Listen to a lover's call!

Brightest, beautifullest, best!
Mightiest, gentlest! virgin Queen!
Goddess of the starry vest,
From thy crescent couch oh lean!

Lean, and listen! without THEE,
Wind, Earth, Waters, might in vain
Seek to do my bidding. See
How those Rocks deform thy reign!

How they break the fields of light
Where thy subject spirits play!
Sink, oh sink them from thy sight!
Bid them pass, like thoughts, away!

As Aurelius repeated these words, he kept looking out intently on the Rocks, which every moment sank lower and lower, beneath the still surface of the waters, till at last they totally vanished from his sight, and the sea lay beneath the moon, as far as the eye could reach on every side, one flat unbroken expanse of dusky light, except where the gorgeous band of gently moving moon-beams played and flickered across it, from the edge of the horizon, down to the very foot of the cliff where Aurelius was now standing, and against which the waters now lay.

Blank amazement was the first feeling that came to Aurelius, at the sight of this seeming miracle. But this feeling immediately gave way to the almost fearful joy which rushed upon his heart, when he thought of the consequences that waited on what he saw: for he now felt that his task was finally accomplished, and forgot that anything he might see to-night was merely to be regarded as an omen of what was to happen on the morrow.

The first impulse of Aurelius was, to hasten at once to the castle of Dorigen, and claim the fulfilment of her Vow. But this, the hour precluded; besides which, the profound sentiment of respect for the Lady Dorigen which more than ever blended with his passionate love, induced him almost instantly to pause, now that he seemed to behold the object of all his hopes placed within his grasp. He must at least ponder on the fittest means of making her acquainted with his return.

After having again, therefore, satisfied himself that his senses had not deceived him, and that the Rocks really had disappeared, he at once departed to his place of sojourn, and passed the night in pondering on the mode he should adopt, of communicating with the Lady Dorigen.

At length the morning came; and Aurelius despatched a young page whom he had brought with him from Italy, with directions that he should crave to see the Lady Dorigen, and having acquainted her with the return of his

lord, should inform her that at the hour of noon, on that day, she might look to see performed the task which she had imposed on Aurelius at their last meeting.

Aurelius then issued forth from his retreat, and proceeded to the sea-shore, intending to gaze once more on the scene of the night before, and fully satisfy his still doubting reason, as to the reality of what he had witnessed.

On reaching the spot, what was his mingled astonishment and dismay, at finding the whole scene just as he had been accustomed to see it! There the Rocks were, lifting up their pointed crests as heretofore, and breaking with their rude shadows the otherwise lovely line of splendour which the newly-risen sun was flinging over the still waters!

Aurelius was on the point of yielding himself up at once to the passionate despair, blended with a certain strange alarm, that now seized upon him: for he could not help fancying that what he had seemed to behold the

night before was but the vision of a distempered brain, and that his wits were leaving him just as he had begun to gain glimpses of that true use of them which his recent travel and intercourse in foreign lands had opened to him.

In a few moments, however, he recollected that he was bid to regard the appearances of the preceding night merely as omens of the final event. And in this hope, therefore, and whether he was to regard what he had witnessed as a vision or a reality, he once more put on patience, and waited the return of his messenger, who presently arrived with the intelligence that the Lady Dorigen had received him graciously—had smiled, though not without an expression of strange wonder passing across her face, at the delivery of the latter part of his message,—had enquired anxiously, and in the kindest words, after his lord's health,—and had desired him to say to Aurelius that she should not fail, at noon, to look forth from her favourite window upon the sea.

Chapter VIII.

We must now return to Dorigen herself. Her first feeling on receiving the messenger of Aurelius was, an unfeigned joy of heart, at the news which he brought her of his lord's health, coupled as it was with the proof (for such she took his message to be) that time and travel had cured his former cause of absence, and had even so fully restored him to himself, that he could venture to recommence his friendly intercourse with her and Arviragus, by a jesting reference to that parting which had left so serious an impression upon her mind.

When, however, the page had left her for a short time, Dorigen began to think a little less lightly of the message which Aurelius had sent her; or rather, she began to fear that it might indicate a change in his mental condition, directly opposite to that which she

had at first supposed. She recollected, too, that he had, at parting from her, intimated his intention of not again presenting himself before her, unless to perform the wild project which her last words had suggested to him; and she began to fear that his imagination had dwelt upon this project, till he had at last persuaded himself of the possibility of its performance; and that now he had returned, with his mind in even a less fit state for that friendly intercourse which she had at first anticipated, than when he departed two years ago.

As to the actual performance of the task in question—*that* never once passed across the mind of Dorigen. So entirely occupied was she with her kind-hearted wishes and fears, touching the welfare of another, that she at first only recollected the general purport of the message Aurelius had sent her, and entirely overlooked that part of it which (if she could admit even the possibility of the project to which it related) so fearfully concerned herself.

While Dorigen was turning in her mind the uneasy fears with which the message of Aurelius had now filled her, she was joined by her husband. Arviragus immediately observed that something was troubling her; and the sight of him as immediately determined her as to the course she should pursue. Accordingly, she at once related to him that part of her last conference with Aurelius which a natural, though she now thought a weak and foolish scruple, had induced her to withhold from him; and then she told him that Aurelius was returned to Armorica, and the message she just received from him; and she begged Arviragus to see him immediately, and ascertain the true state of one whom they both still looked upon as a friend.

Momentary as the feeling was which came over Arviragus, at the relation of this strange Vow, and of the still more strange message of Aurelius in reference to it, it cast a shadow upon his face, as it past, which was not unobserved by Dorigen. Both the feeling, and the expres-

sion of it, however, passed away as quickly as they came; and Arviragus at first thought of nothing but how he might second the kind wishes of Dorigen, as to the state of mind into which they feared Aurelius might have fallen. But as they both at once recollected that Aurelius was not at his own castle, and that therefore they could not communicate with him till they should again hear from him, they determined to wait that event.

In the mean time, the hour of noon was approaching; and there is no denying that every step it made towards Dorigen and Arviragus, seemed to increase a sort of restless and indistinct anxiety, which they both secretly felt, and which both with equal pertinacity agreed in attributing to their interest in the condition of Aurelius; and which condition they could not hope to know from their own observation, until after the hour he had indicated in his message.

At length, when the hour of noon was near

at hand, they repaired together to one of their chambers, overlooking the terrace; as Dorigen wished to be able to tell Aurelius, jestingly, that she had not neglected his injunctions, touching the promised miracle.

Who shall tell the mutual feelings of Dorigen and Arviragus, standing as they did in the presence of each other, when they observed, on approaching the windows of the apartment to which they had now repaired, that some of the smaller Rocks, upon the coast, had wholly disappeared from sight, and that the larger ones had sunk to less than half their usual height above the waters! For some moments they looked alternately at each other, and at the Rocks, with a stunning and bewildering sensation, which caused a temporary suspension of all consciousness, except of that sensation itself.

On recovering from this state of blank and incredulous surprise, Dorigen was the first to speak.

"What can this be?" she exclaimed, turning to Arviragus—who did not seem to hear her, but kept gazing fixedly on a particular point in the distance.

"Arviragus," she continued, again gazing forth on the sea, "do you observe the Rocks?" She paused for a few moments, and then added, "They seem sinking from my sight, every moment, as I look upon them! Is it fancy? See! Arviragus, see! do you not see?"

And she pointed eagerly with her hand towards a particular projecting corner of one of the Rocks, which finally disappeared beneath the water as she spoke.

"Dorigen!" exclaimed Arviragus, without noticing what she said, but motioning with his hand for her to come close to him—"Dorigen—did you see? That point! It sank this moment as I watched it! What can this mean?"

As he turned and looked upon her eagerly, the blood left her cheeks and lips, and she

stood motionless as a statue, with her finger still pointing, and kept gazing on the Rocks, as if, like the basilisk's eye, they at once fascinated and transfixed her.

"Dorigen!" exclaimed Arviragus, forgetting all things but the fearful change that he beheld in her—"Dorigen!" and as he touched her, he almost started to feel that her flesh was chilly cold, and trembled in his grasp.

"Look!" she exclaimed, without moving, or taking away her eyes from the sea—"Look! they sink! they sink one after another!—My Vow!"

Then, after a brief pause, she seemed to recover her self-possession; the blood rushed tumultuously back into her cheeks; and as she turned and looked on Arviragus, and leaned within his opened arms, she felt as if she had awakened from a hideous dream, and was once more herself, in being his.

But her joy was momentary. In brief, they turned again to look upon the Rocks; and as

they kept gazing, alternately on them and on each other, the objects of their gaze gradually sank more and more beneath the water; till at last, as the bell of the castle struck the hour of noon, they every one utterly disappeared, and left the ocean an unbroken expanse, as far as the eye could reach in all directions.

Dorigen and Arviragus looked at each other for a few moments, without uttering a word.

At last, Dorigen said, "Arviragus—this is no mockery—no vision;—and Aurelius has my Vow—my solemn, sworn Vow!"

"Which must be paid, if he demands it," said Arviragus, with a sad solemnity of voice and manner, and as if almost unconscious that he was speaking his thoughts aloud.

"Nay," said Dorigen, "but he is generous—and—"

"Let us speak no more of this now, my beloved Dorigen," said Arviragus, interrupting her—"Come, let us leave this chamber—" and he instantly, without more words, led her away to another part of the castle.

Chapter IX.

Meanwhile, Aurelius was watching the disappearing Rocks, with even a more intense surprise and curiosity than Dorigen and Arviragus themselves: for *their* emotions were the creation of a moment; while his had been gathering strength, day by day, and hour by hour, from the moment that this new hope had been awakened within him; and his fears had strengthened these emotions no less than his hopes: till at length, when he beheld the last point of the last rock sink beneath the waters, and leave the sea one unbroken plain, he clapped his hands together, and shouting forth an exclamation of mingled joy and wonder, sank for a few moments into that state of vacant abstraction which at first attends the sudden and perfect fulfilment either of our hopes or our fears.

Recovering from this state, Aurelius once

more assured himself that the sight before him was no delusion; and then he began to think of what, until now, he had scarcely dwelt on at all during the whole time that he had been induced to look, with something like hope, for the accomplishment of his task: namely, the final consequences of that accomplishment. The task itself had so absorbed his mind, that *that* had all along seemed the end at which he was aiming. That end he had now reached; and it seemed to open before him a new one, which he had scarcely permitted himself even to imagine till now.

The first momentary feeling of Aurelius was, that the accomplishment of the prescribed task had removed all obstacles to his wishes, and that Dorigen would now be—*his!* He presently, however, recollected that the performance of a Vow was one thing, and the interchange of human affections another. He found, too, what he had scarcely observed until now, and perhaps never would have observed but for

this occasion of being called upon to ponder within himself as to the extraordinary circumstances in which he was now suddenly placed, —that though his love for Dorigen had increased rather than diminished during his absence from her, that absence, and the circumstances attending it, had totally changed the character of his love, and given to it an imaginative and intellectual colouring, which had not before belonged to it.

In truth, the love of Aurelius had been created and called into life by the beauties of Dorigen's person merely; and it had been nourished and strengthened by those beauties alone, up to the very moment of his quitting her, and even in the manifest absence of the least gleam of hope: a trial, it must be confessed, over which no other kind of love could have triumphed. But when this perpetual food and fuel were taken away, and it was called upon either to sustain itself upon the airy aliment of imagination alone, or to

waste away and wither in its own consuming flames, it did the latter; but from its ashes a phœnix love arose, the seeds and elements of which ever exist in that other love which springs from the senses, and which elements lie dormant, or awake and germinate into beauty, according to the nature of the soil on which they fall, and the circumstances which surround them.

Aurelius pondered on his passion for Dorigen, and on the signal change which he now began to perceive had taken place in it, till the bell of the castle told him that an hour had elapsed since noon, and that consequently his appointed task was in all things fulfilled; for as he looked across the sea, his gaze passed uninterruptedly over its whole space, which was now illumined by the emerging sun, and beautified by the reflections of the breaking and dispersing clouds, and of the blue sky which every here and there opened among them.

Without waiting to look with any distinct-

ness into the future, or even to question his own purposes, Aurelius determined at once to seek an interview with the Lady Dorigen. He therefore immediately sent his page with a message, couched in the most respectful terms, merely begging to know if he might wait on the Lady.

Poor Dorigen! The sight of the page turned her heart sick within her, as she sat, waiting his coming, in one of the lower apartments of the castle.

When the page had delivered his bidding, she paused for a few moments, and then merely replied, that in an hour she would receive the Lord Aurelius, on the terrace leading to the gardens of the castle. She then immediately sought her husband,—who had previously retired to his own apartments, for the purpose of consulting with himself, and of leaving Dorigen to do the like, as to the circumstances in which they were mutually placed by the fatal Vow of Dorigen.

The loving and beloved wife and husband met,

with looks and feelings—how different from the evidences of that pure and uninterrupted joy which they had hitherto invariably experienced at the sight and in the presence of one another! But there were no indications of empty or unseemly passion, on either side—no impatient and vain regrets—no recriminating anger. They took each other's hand, and sat down side by side, and for some minutes remained utterly silent—as if they felt that speech was a thing which might increase their cause of sorrow, but could not remove or lessen it. Both seemed, by mutual consent, to have put on an air and look of funereal stillness, which indicated that they had met together to bury what had hitherto been the mutual life and joy of their hearts, but which fate—a fate at which they presumed not to repine—had now suddenly reft from them, and they had nothing left to do, but bid it a final farewell.

"My beloved Dorigen," said Arviragus, after having looked at her mournfully for some

time, "this grief which has fallen upon us, is one that may not be put into words, and that need not; for no words can avert or lessen it. But something must be said, touching it; for there is still left to us a choice of miseries. This fatal Vow is either to be *broken*—"

Dorigen's face grew pale as he uttered the last word—

"Or to be *performed*."

She shuddered all over, as if she had seen an adder in her path, and then the blood rushed back to her cheeks and lips, and she grasped the hand of Arviragus convulsively.

"If *performed*," he continued, "we are lost —lost to ourselves—lost to one another. If *broken*, the TRUTH of my beloved Dorigen—that Truth" he exclaimed, with a fervent, and almost passionate expression, which, however, lasted only while he uttered the next few words— "that Truth which lifts and likens her to those above, even more than her wondrous beauty, is gone from her for ever, and with it that

inward joy which nothing else can give—not even a mutual love like ours!"

Here he paused for a while, and she seemed to sink into a deep abstraction, as the sounds of his voice ceased. At length he asked—

"What says my Dorigen? Let her forgive me if I am supposing that she *can* pause, between her truth and any other earthly thing. But ——"

"Oh! my Arviragus"—she replied, interrupting him, in a voice, the mournful sweetness of which shook for a moment his resolute thoughts from their foundation. "Oh! Arviragus, I have long felt that our bliss, so bright and unbroken as it was, could not endure. In my dreams, at least, I have felt this: my waking thoughts and feelings have been all happiness, for they have been all with you. Yet now that grief is come, I feel as if the very thought of it were new to me—a monster to which even my dreaming fancy has hitherto been a stranger. And the thought of

it makes a child of me. I must weep, when I should act."

She was silent for a space, yet did not remove her looks from the face of Arviragus, though the tears poured down her cheeks like rain. He spoke not, nor even lifted his eyes from the ground, where he had cast them the moment her voice fell upon his hearing. After a little while she resumed.

"Tell me, Arviragus, what I should do: for my own weak and perplexed will does but mock and blind me. Tell me, and I will do it —ay, even though it bid me break my plighted Vow." She paused a moment, and then added mournfully,—"And yet, what matter which course I take; since either makes me unfit for your love?"

"Oh! speak not so," said Arviragus firmly; "the love I bear towards you is a thing that circumstance can touch not. It is not *that* which moves me; it is to think that my Dorigen— —But no"—he resumed after a slight pause, in

which he seemed to brace his faculties up to the point from which they had for a few moments fallen—"no—this matter must not be thought of after this fashion. Dorigen's truth must not be put in competition with any earthly thing, or with all earthly things besides. And if *she* so puts it, it is for *my* sake;—which must not be. You bid me tell you what you should do. Thus I reply. Act, Dorigen, as if Arviragus lived not, or had never lived. He never did live, to good, till you wrought him to that life; and he holds no life but what is yours. Think of him, then, as one who will love you, whatever befals, and will love you the more, the more you need his love."

She rose up as he spoke, and fell upon his neck, and wept silently for a space. Then, summoning all her spirits, she looked in his face, with an expression of high-wrought resolution in her eyes, not unmixed with a touch of triumphant joy, as she said:—"Arviragus, thy Dorigen's *soul*, at least, shall be kept worthy of

such love. For the rest, she can die, if need be."

And, without another word, she turned and departed.

Chapter X.

At the moment that Dorigen left the presence of her lord, she felt as if there was no act of heroism she could not perform, to make or keep herself worthy of his pure and deep affection. But, oh! how her woman's heart quailed within her, as she paced the terrace on which she waited the coming of Aurelius! In extremes, however deadly, the courage of woman is often heroic as that of man. But courage is a virtue opposed to the very instincts of her nature, and therefore cannot last but in actual presence of the objects which call it forth. Dorigen thought of her past happiness, and of that which she had looked for in the long future; and as the whole seemed

to take the form of a rich vision which a thunderclap had dispersed, she wept aloud, as a child weeps when awakened in the morning from a night-long dream of joy.

When the time, however, was close at hand that was to bring Aurelius to her presence, she called home her wandering thoughts, and fixed them all upon the task which awaited her. And when she felt that if her fatal Vow compelled her to embrace shame and dishonour, at least it did not command her to *live* under them, she addressed herself, with a solemn gravity, to call to mind the many virtuous wives and maidens whose lot had been as heavy as hers might be, and who had become immortal by their heroic courage, in throwing it off at the cheap cost of their lives. And as she ran through the catalogue of their names, and dwelt with a kind of fond sympathy on the particular sorrow of each, her face resumed its wonted calmness, and she almost forgot her own grief in pity for that of others.

In the midst of these thoughts and feelings, she heard a door close, and footsteps approaching. The next moment Aurelius stood before her.

Her heart once more sank and fainted within her, and she stood silent and motionless, and scarcely seemed to recognise his presence. But as he sank upon his knee, and was about to pay his homage upon her hand, her whole frame seemed to suffer a momentary convulsion; and then she became calm, and spoke thus:—

"Rise, my Lord Aurelius. Nay, speak not," she continued, as he motioned to address her—"speak not, but rise and hear me. The sight which I have seen to-day, however brought about—whether by Art, or Nature, or by some strange unholy Power that belongs to neither—leaves little to be said between us. You have my solemn Vow; (how obtained, and with what motive given, I ask you not;) and the forfeit of it must needs have been paid, at

whatever fatal cost, if Dorigen had been the sole arbitress of her own fate. But she is not so. Nay—hear, and interrupt me not! I know full well that I should have thought of this, before I pledged my faith and truth to give you that which is not mine to give. But though my husband's commands (which a true wife holds to above all earthly things, no less through love than duty) might absolve me from *one* part of the fatal consequences of my oath, they could not absolve me from another; they could not cure the violated truth attendant on a broken Vow. Think, then, Aurelius, what a husband Dorigen is wife to, when she stands here by *his* consent, to say to you, that if you demand the forfeiture of her oath, rather than she should break that oath, it must and shall be paid!"

As Dorigen spake, the blood rushed into the face of Aurelius, and coursed through his veins with a swift motion, that for a period stopped his breath. But he spoke not, and,

after a few moments' pause, the lady continued to address him, with the same deadly composure of manner as before, and the same sad solemnity of voice.

"You have told me that you *love* me," said she. "Think of *his* love who has mine! think what *that* love must be, when it would rather part at once from all which is its bliss (for he cannot think that I would *live* under dishonour) than see its object violate her Vow;—which, however, I must and would violate, though at my soul's peril, if *he* were to bid me. Aurelius," she continued, "you were wont to be generous, good, and noble. It was these qualities which drew from me the fatal power you now possess, to destroy me. Speak not to me now," she added, as she saw that he was about to open his lips, for she seemed to dread his words like the stroke of death.—"Speak not to me now, but think on what I have said, and lay it to your heart. Till to-morrow, farewell." And she was turning to leave him.

"Lady,"—exclaimed Aurelius, "I beseech you, stay! What I would say, must be said now. I dare not trust myself till to-morrow. Now that I have again looked upon your beauties, it might be fatal to us both. I came hither but to sue and bend as heretofore, not to claim or to demand; to lay my duteous homage at your feet, and take with gratitude whatever your goodness might please to bestow, of pity or regard. True, I have spent whole years in compassing that which (I scarce know how) has this day been accomplished. And there has not passed an hour of those years, that I have not fed upon the hope (vain and empty as it might seem, and did, till yesternight) which your gentle pity gave me at our parting, and which mocked while it sustained me. Do not contemn or hate me, lady, for cherishing that on which my very being hung. I had died without it. But it wa sa *hope* alone that I lived on. Think not my profane thoughts ever passed beyond it, affronting the deep reverence of my love! Pardon the

word! It is the last time I shall utter it. Indeed, I speak not of what *is*, but what is past. Your words have awakened thoughts within me, which, if they have slumbered so long, were rocked to their unwholesome rest by the storm of passion that has so shaken and possessed me, since I first beheld you. Those words have restored me—may I say to *myself?* At least, they have made me feel less unworthy than I was, of that esteem which you once expressed for me, and the mere memory of which strengthens me to do an act, if not so high and noble in its self-devotion as that of your beloved and happy lord, Arviragus, almost as difficult in the doing. Lady, I remit the forfeiture of your Vow, and leave you as free as when it was unpronounced."

As Aurelius uttered these last words, a wild joy darted into the eyes, and flushed the late pale cheeks, of Dorigen; and when he had concluded them, she rushed past him, as if unconscious that he was present, and was

hurrying from the terrace, in search of her husband. But a few moments recalled her to herself; and she returned to Aurelius, with her face overspread and lighted up with a new radiance, that seemed to emanate from it like a glory, and communicate something of its joyous brightness to the till now sad and steadfast features of Aurelius.

She looked at him for a moment, and then fell on her knees, and took his hand, and pressed it to her lips, without uttering a word. Aurelius raised her in an instant, and again spoke:

"Does, then, the Lady Dorigen give me back that esteem which her late fears, and this new joy which springs within her, tell me she must have long since taken away? If she does, how are my poor toils and sorrows overpaid!"

"Aurelius," said she, "you have, by a word, changed me from the most lost and hopeless, to the happiest of wives; and in making *me*

happy, have made the noblest and the gentlest of husbands no less so: for we are one in all things. Ask but yourself, then, if you can be that husband's friend; and, if you can, be sure you may be mine, and we may all be blessed and bettered by the union. Come to us to-morrow; (for to-day we shall both of us be too happy to think as we ought of him who has made us so); and let me place your hands in one another's, and *he* shall thank you, as my poor tongue cannot. Let me seek him now. Forgive me this impatience to be gone; but, if you knew how I long to pour my new-born bliss into his heart, and to share it with him! Let me seek him now. Farewell! we shall look for you to-morrow. And let me once more say,—ask your own generous heart how we *should* greet you when we all three meet together; and be sure our esteem will not lag behind your claims on it. Farewell!"

So saying, the Lady Dorigen left Aurelius to pursue his thoughtful way homeward, and hastened to join her husband.

Let us not again intrude ourselves into the presence of that now happy pair—happier than ever, henceforward; for this one sad day has thrown an added brightness over all the future years of their life; since, in dwelling with a fond delay on that which they *are*, they do not (as they once did) forget that which they might have been.

Chapter XI.

As for Aurelius, at first he found himself scarcely less happy in the happiness he had conferred than those on whom he had bestowed it; for he now for the first time learned, that there is no pleasure so entirely satisfying as that which grows out of its communication to others.

But Aurelius had scarcely resumed possession of his castle, and caught the first glimpses of that calm joy which awaited him as the chosen friend and companion of Arviragus and Dori-

gen, than he recollected the claims upon him of the unknown Student, and the necessity of instantly providing for the fulfilment of them. He had pledged his knightly Vow to pay the Student a thousand pounds' weight of gold, if the event he had predicted should be completed at the appointed hour. It had been completed in every particular; and if he who sought its performance had chosen to forego the reward he might have claimed for it, the cost was no less due to him who had brought it about.

But when Aurelius applied himself to the new task of getting together the means of fulfilling his engagement with the Student, he soon found, that in the thoughtless generosity of his newly awakened hopes, what he had promised amounted to nearly the whole value of his estates.

This discovery cast a serious gloom over the fair prospect that had just opened upon him. But there was no room for delay or consideration. His voluntary promise had been given;

the conditions of it were fulfilled; and it never once occurred to him that he *could* break it, much less did he deliberate with himself whether he would do so or not. He therefore, immediately took the means of procuring one moiety of the sum he had promised; and having placed the five hundred pounds' weight of pure gold in a chest, he took a brief leave of Arviragus and Dorigen, and set out with it, in search of the Student; intending to relate to him the circumstances in which he was placed, and to solicit his forbearance for a while, till he should be enabled to fulfil his promise to the uttermost.

Aurelius found the youthful Student in the same city where he had left him: and having caused the chest of gold to be conveyed to his dwelling, he followed it thither, and presented himself before him.

The Student received him with that mild gravity of demeanour which had never left him during their former conferences.

"Well," said he, after a friendly greeting

had passed between them, and he had looked for a moment in the face of Aurelius, "I fear I need not ask the Lord Aurelius if my power to serve him has proved answerable to his wishes. He does not speak or look like one who rejoices in an accomplished purpose; still less like a lover triumphing in the possession of a mistress whom nothing but a supposed miracle could give to him."

"My task," said Aurelius gravely, "thanks to your aid and directions, has been accomplished in all things; and if I do not triumph in the end to which it was to lead me,"—(and here there is no denying that an expression of something more than mere sadness—a look of utter disappointment—passed across his face; but it presently cleared away, as he proceeded in the next few words,—) "it is because I triumph in a still higher bliss—that of bestowing a blessing, instead of receiving one."

Aurelius then proceeded to relate the circumstance attending the accomplishment of the

task: the piteous grief of Dorigen; the noble self-devotion of her husband; the triumph of reason and courtesy over passion in himself; and finally, the happy consequences that promised to attend that triumph, so far as his merely mental condition was concerned.

"In what remains to be said," he continued, somewhat sadly, "let me be as brief as possible; and be sure I should not have troubled you with a word on this matter, but that the headlong passion which possessed me when last we met, has led me to make a promise of which I am now to beg that your generosity (for it is to *that* alone I must appeal) would remit the fulfilment for a brief space. I have here brought you one-half of the promised reward of your assistance."

The Student smiled as Aurelius pointed at the chest containing the gold. Aurelius observed him with some surprise, but he continued:

"My whole estates will barely suffice to

fulfil the rest of our contract of honour. What I have to ask of you, therefore, is, that you will bear with me patiently, while I so dispose them, that I may to the letter fulfil my voluntary Vow."

The Student again smiled, as Aurelius concluded these words; and after a few moments' pause, he spoke thus:

"Forgetful that I was! In pursuing the invisible wealth of knowledge, I had entirely overlooked the substantial riches that awaited me, as one of the results of that knowledge. I remember, now, the promise you made me at our parting. You freely admit, then, that my part of the contract has been performed to the letter, and that the rich reward is earned."

"I do," said Aurelius.

"But there is one thing," continued the Student, "which, I almost fear, even the noble heart of the Lord Aurelius will not permit him so readily to allow. It is this;—that an unknown Student, with no patrimony but his

honour, and no wealth but his knowledge, holds as free a right to do an act of courtesy, as if the blood of princes flowed in his veins, and the wealth of a nation swelled his coffers. That knowledge (such as it is) which enabled me to serve the Lord Aurelius, was not purchased by gold; and I would fain not barter it. I have no claim to this reward which the honour of the Lord Aurelius now proffers me. I did but jest in asking it; and have no way earned it, more than in telling him beforehand of what neither I, nor he, nor all the Powers and Principalities of the world, could have hastened or retarded for a single moment. What I ask of him, therefore, is, that he will receive an act of courtesy in the same spirit in which he would perform one; and that he will be generous enough not again to offer me what he must feel that I could not accept with honour."

There is no need to describe the gratified surprise of Aurelius, at this noble behaviour

of the young Student. He pressed upon him, not without some difficulty, sufficient to secure him a learned leisure for the rest of his life; and after having sojourned with him long enough to confirm that taste for the acquirement of knowledge which he had unconsciously gained during his late travels in search of that which was not to be found, the Lord Aurelius returned to his castle in Armorica, a wiser, better, and happier man than anything but his own follies and sorrows could have made him.

A BRIEF pause followed the conclusion of the foregoing Tale; and then a conversation ensued, portions only of which the purposes of these records require that we should relate. Being interdicted, as we have said, from indicating the respective writer of each Tale, we are reluctantly compelled to give the reader the trouble of assigning the remarks to their several owners, in the best way he can.

A.—"And do you really expect English husbands and wives, of the Nineteenth Century, to sympathize with actions and feelings such as you attribute to your immaculate Dorigen, and your immovable Arviragus?"

B.—"If they do not, it is no fault of mine,—nor, perhaps, of their own. But *if* they do not, it is only a reason the more for telling them such stories,—since the natural inference is, that a spurious and sickly sympathy with their *class*

has overlaid that natural and healthy sympathy with their *kind*, in the absence of which they may be very good English wives and husbands, but they have ceased to be members of that great human family which the imagination alone can 'bind each to each in natural piety.'"

A.—"But has not our only accredited casuist, Paley, taught us that other vows besides those of lovers are 'made to be broken'—not merely rash or wicked vows, but inconvenient ones? such, for instance, as that of promising a highway-robber a future gratuity, if he will be good enough to spare our lives?"

B.—"Yes;—and being a wise man, and an archdeacon to boot, Paley has taught us wisely and archdeaconly, no doubt: so if you think my Tale will teach the reverse—if you suppose it will tempt any of the married flirts of May-fair to tamper with their conjugal fidelity, and their lords gravely to look on, or to acquiesce in the enormity, (as the 'Sorrows of Werter' impelled silly young gentlemen to blow out

their want of brains, and Schiller's 'Robbers' enticed scampish ones to turn Banditti,) you have only to accompany it by an abstract of Paley's argument, and so put the matter on its right footing! But in the meantime be pleased to observe, that sympathy has nothing to do with the desire or the impulse of imitation, or even with the sentiment of applause."

A.—"But then your Breton landholder, lugging half the value of his estate in hard cash, scores of leagues (before pavés were heard of, much less rail-roads) to take up a verbal 'promise to pay,' for which there was no 'value received,' and which could never be presented; and (credat Judeas!) a poor German Scholar refusing the cart-load of money, on a point of courtesy!—courtesy, above all things, in a German Student!! I'm afraid your 'miscellaneous' readers will think you have over-stepped even the 'ample verge' of our compact, and have not only shown them human nature by 'the light that never was on sea or

land,' but have introduced them to *people* who are in that predicament—subjects of the pre-adamite Sultans, or cousins-german of the Man in the Moon !"

B.—"Well, if they should, all I can say in reply is that I have erred in good company, and have, in my simplicity, been putting faith in the human nature that is to be found in such shallow pretenders as Chaucer and Boccaccio, instead of seeking for it on the shelves of the Minerva Library."

A.—"Do you mean then that your Tale is to be found in either of those writers ?"

B.—"In both, if I remember rightly—that is to say, the brief rudiments of it, comprised in some half-dozen pages. And I suspect that unless each of us can, in case of need, shelter ourselves under some such 'panoply of proof,' there will be no salvation for us from the shafts of that criticism which believes nothing but what it sees."

A.—"Well—there is something in that, I confess."

Here the contributor of the Tale next to be submitted to the judgment of our critical coterie joined in the conversation.

"Yes," said he—"and there is more than you seem to perceive; there is the additional advantage, in taking subjects from accredited writers, of being certain beforehand that they are at least *adapted* to the developement of character and passion. And if great writers themselves have felt this, (which they seem to have done—for there is no end to their repetitions of each other, so far as mere subject goes,) small ones are scarcely safe in adopting any other rule. For my part, if I were to set up for a writer of Tales, of the particular kind we have been speaking of, I should as soon think, now-a-days, of *inventing* a subject, as of trying to invent the steam-engine over again, or discover a new road from Coventry Street to Hyde-park Corner. —And, so far from scrupling to avail myself of anything in *their* mode of treating the subject which might happen to be suitable to my own,

I should think it a senseless presumption to *avoid* doing so, provided the respective *forms* of our compositions were sufficiently distinct.

"I hope, too," continued he, "à propos to the particular subject-matter of the Tale I am to have the honour of reading to you to-morrow evening,—that we shall all of us keep as clear as our friend has done, of that everlasting blunder, about Love, which has been at once the staple and the stumbling-block of modern fiction, from a period 'to which the memory of man runneth not to the contrary.' Who can wonder that the appetite of the English public is sickly, when it has been fed since its babyhood on nothing more invigorating than *eau sucré* flavoured with *huile de rose?* If there is one thing more false than another, it is the theory on which our love-stories are one and all constructed: for the exceptions are only just numerous enough to prove the rule. Even our best writers retain, as if it were a religious truth, the childish fiction which

our very bread-and-butter misses—much more their match-making mamas—have rejected in practice, as entirely as they have left off ruffs and fardingales. English women, now-a-days, have grown, on the subject of love, a great deal 'wiser than they know;' and accordingly, 'love-matches,' where other matters than the love are not conformable, are as rare now as they used to be rife; and where they do happen (among the cultivated classes I mean—for the rest still hold to the creed of their great-grandmothers,) it is between sensitive young ladies and their father's footman, or precocious young gentlemen and their pedagogue's daughter, or their mother's maid."

"But what," it was observed, "is to become of our writers of fiction—prose or poetry—if they depose Love from his present supreme seat in their Olympus?"

"To the poets," was the reply, "I have nothing to say. They have always been a century or so behind their age, and I suspect

their 'so potent art' depends on their continuing so; for it is their business to throw us back upon the pleasant follies and the brilliant fancies of youth, not carry us forward to the sober wisdom which supersedes them. But prose-writers, (even when they deal with fiction,) should be in advance of their age—or not be at all. But I do not ask them, in the present case, to serve their favourite god as Jupiter once served a deity of still higher pretensions,—kick him out of heaven entirely,—but only to place him on his proper and legitimate footing there, instead of assigning him (as you seem to admit they have done) the supreme seat. In the drama of actual life the passion of love, now-a-days, plays pretty much the part it is entitled to play; but in the fictions which profess to reflect that life, it usurps the whole stage. The consequence is, that those who get their knowledge of life from books (and the category now comprises nine-tenths of the whole world) are

so hampered between their instincts and their 'public instructors,' that, though they manage to go pretty right, it is (like the crabs and the watermen) with their eyes fixed in an opposite direction; they make, for the most part, tolerably reasonable marriages, and then, by way of trimming the balance, they break half of them, on the plea that they were not 'made in heaven.'

"But enough of this. All I wished to do, in mooting the point, was, to smooth the way for a Tale which turns on the heretical belief that Love is at least as much under the controul of reason as any other of the passions, and that the certain cure for a silly and ignoble love, is a wise and noble one."

LOVE CURED BY LOVE.

Chapter I.

During the period when the Portuguese maintained a friendly footing in Tidore, one of the Moluccas, it happened that the native King of that island, while engaged in his favourite amusement of fishing, was surprised and carried off by the emissaries of a neighbouring chief,—a man of a bold, crafty, and savage nature, who was at war with all the other islands.

As the King of Tidore was greatly beloved by his people, this event cast a gloom over all hearts,—which, though lessened, was not dispelled, by the knowledge of those lofty virtues, and that grave wisdom, which marked the character of Quisara, the king's sister, who, by right of succession, exercised the sovereign sway in his absence.

This Princess presented a noble example of

those qualities with which unassisted nature is capable of filling the heart, and adorning the mind, where no adverse influences are at hand to counteract her workings. To all the lofty bearing, and what would in a more refined age and country be deemed the unfeminine boldness, which had been generated by her station, as Princess of an uncultivated and warlike people, she added a rich and almost voluptuous softness, both of sentiment and demeanour, which gathered and fixed around her all that feeling of *sex*, which her higher and more imposing qualities might otherwise have dissipated: so that while her male subjects looked up to her with a sort of awed and reverent admiration, as a being sent by Heaven to be their head and chief, there were few among them who did not at times regard her in the softer light of a woman, made to be cherished and beloved.

This last effect was greatly assisted by the extraordinary beauty of the Princess; who was in the bloom of youth, and as much surpassed

her countrywomen in the charms of her person as in the qualities of her mind. The chief object of her worship, the glorious Sun himself, seemed to have glowed upon her with looks of more tender love than was his wont, and had forborne to dye her features in that dark livery which he had compelled all other of his swarthy subjects to wear, in this his own peculiar clime.

At the period when the King of Tidore had been carried off by the stratagem of his crafty enemy, he was entertaining at his Court two noble guests, who came thither avowedly as suitors for the hand of the Princess Quisara. One of these was the King of Bakam, a neighbouring island; the other a young Prince, who had been led from the Indian Peninsula by the fame of Quisara's beauty.

To these there is now, at the opening of our story, to be added the cunning and cruel chief himself who had committed the late outrage, and who boldly presented himself at the Court of Tidore, in the character of a third suitor to

the Princess;—having first duly secured his personal safety, by negotiating with her, in her character of sovereign, for the delivering up her captive brother, on certain conditions to be named by him on his arrival; and which conditions now proved to be those of a marriage union between himself and the Princess.

But besides the three suitors above-mentioned, there was a fourth, a noble Portuguese soldier, named Ruy Dias, who, though he loved the lady at least as well and worthily as either of her other suitors, and was, moreover, so far as she had hitherto disclosed her feelings and purposes, looked upon by her with a not less favourable eye than his more high-born rivals, had not hitherto dared to rank himself among the avowed suitors of Quisara.

There were many reasons for this,—among which his deep-rooted and reverential love was the most powerful: for Ruy Dias perpetually felt that Quisara was as much above him in all things else, as she was in mere station. Besides

which, though still in the prime of life, Ruy Dias was several years older than the Princess. And though, as chief military commander of the Portuguese settlement, his occasions of intercourse with her were as frequent as he desired, he had never yet permitted himself even to guess, much less had endeavoured to satisfy himself, as to the state of her feelings towards him. In truth, his love, though settled in his heart, and absorbing all other sentiments there, had never yet dared to show itself in a definite form, even to himself; it seemed to wait for some accidental and outward occasion of disclosing and developing itself. That occasion was at hand.

A few days after the arrival at Tidore of the Governor of Ternata, (the island in which the King of Tidore was held prisoner,) Quisara had procured a slight entertainment to be given at the dwelling of a relative, at which the only stranger invited to be present was Ruy Dias; and before the entertainment was concluded,

she desired her friend and the attendants to leave them, as she wished to converse for a short time on matters of moment with the Portuguese.

As soon as they were, in this unusual and (to Ruy Dias) unlooked-for manner, left alone together, Quisara observed that the countenance of the Portuguese underwent a sudden change, and that, from having been conversing with her and her friend with an air of pleased freedom, he became instantly silent.

She waited for a few moments, and then addressed him, with that frankness of manner which was habitual to her, but with a certain lurking softness of tone and expression, which he had never before observed her to use towards him.

"Why how is this, Ruy Dias?" said she, looking at him fixedly. "A man-at-arms, and daunted by a lady! Soldiers, you know, are privileged to talk with Princes. Come—speak to me—for I have long seen that you desired,

yet delayed to do so—and it was for *that* I sought the present occasion."

"Madam," said Ruy Dias, surprised, and in some degree embarrassed, by this address, the object of which he could by no means divine —"Madam, it is the favours you and your noble brother have ever cast upon me—so high above my poor merits—it is these that strike me mute, when I find myself alone in your presence."

Then, as he continued to gaze upon her, and to observe the look of sweet favour with which she seemed to meet and entertain his ardent gaze, a sudden thought came to him, which presently changed into a new hope; and, as he gazed on, his heart grew bold within him, and seemed to urge him onward, whether he would or no, to the disclosure of its long-cherished, though hitherto scarcely self-acknowledged desires.

Meantime, the lady,—as if, by the instinct of love, she could feel what was passing

within him,—remained silent; and Ruy Dias resumed somewhat abruptly.

"Speak to you, Lady!—what should I say, but call you my most royal mistress—the centre whence proceeds the life by which I live—the saint of my devotions—the fair altar where my first hopes of heaven were lighted, and where my last shall linger and expire—the rich ocean whence my star of honour rose, and where it sets—the bright sun that seems to gild and glorify, while it consumes me!"

Here he paused, and felt abashed at his own boldness; and still more so when he seemed to recollect how little the rhapsody he had just uttered was in unison with the calm sweetness and self-possessing gravity of the person he was addressing.

Quisara smiled a little at the disconcerted air which followed this feeling in Ruy Dias; but she said nothing; and after another pause, he went on, but in a different strain.

"Oh, could our wishes work!—then would

Ruy Dias be a mighty king, and so command affection. And yet, not so—I had rather serve than sway—rather sue than command—if servitude and suing might avail."

"Why now you talk indeed, Ruy Dias,"—said Quisara, "but yet in riddles. Avail?—for what?"

"To lift my hopes," exclaimed he passionately, "from the ground to which they grow, and place them on that pinnacle of glory where they could scarcely know themselves! I dare not speak or wish, unless it be that Quisara were less beautiful than she is, and not a Princess."

"This is not like Ruy Dias," said Quisara, with a soft yet serious expresssion. "He used to speak to me plainly, like a soldier and a friend. Then why not now?—And why would he have me no Princess?"

"Lady, I dare not speak," said he; "and if I dared, I could not."

"Then," said she, with an air of clear

candour that sat upon her more becomingly than all the coying in the world,—"Then I can, and dare. You wish me other than I am, that you might hope to wed me?—Is it not so?—Nay, do not look down abashed. Is it not so?—And you would love me then?"

"Dearer than my soul!" exclaimed Ruy Dias, starting passionately, and lifting his eyes upward, as if to adjure Heaven to witness what he uttered. He was then silent again; and Quisara continued, in the same calm tone and self-possessed manner as before.

"I was fain to know this," said she, "and *therefore* I sought this interview. Now hear *me*. I love you—"

Ruy Dias started from the abstracted attitude into which he had relapsed, and lifting his eyes from the ground, gazed upon her in speechless wonder.

"Nay—hear what I would say—not my *words* only—I love you, Ruy Dias, as much above those suitors who surround me, as you

are above them in all the qualities that should make up a man. You are valiant, generous, noble, modest. These I love; and for these I love you. Do not mistake me"—continued she, seeing that he looked upon her with eyes filled with a wondering joy—"I see these *in* you; but I would also see them in their outward forms—that all the world might see and know them also—else were my love an empty doting, unworthy both of us. Besides—that which I see in you, I feel within myself—only my woman's weakness will not let me put it into act: and virtues are but names, when we but *feel* them. The man that I would make lord of my heart and person, must be as much above myself, as noble actions are above noble thoughts. Think then, Ruy Dias, what may be done to win me—for something must—something both great and difficult—something worthy, not me, but yourself. Do some such thing, and I may——"

"Command me, Lady," exclaimed he

fervently, and starting to his feet—"and if the act should peril my life and soul, I will attempt it."

"Nay," replied she," you are too sudden. The act that is to win Quisara must be no rash one, springing from an empty valour, that lives but in itself. It must be not only brave, but worthy; not only glorious, but great; as noble for its wisdom as its valour. Know you of no such act?"

Here she paused, as if to give him an opportunity of replying—which he did, by vehement, but vague and general protestations of devotion to her service.

"Well," said she, "I will not doubt you. But it is your noble nature that I trust in—not your words. Come, let us now seek our friends, and talk of lighter matters. But first let me tell you, that I give public audience to-morrow to my general suitors; and that then, perhaps, something may chance, pointing at what we have spoken of. Come," she added,

seeing an abstracted air come over him—"be not sad, Ruy Dias: have I not said how much above them all I hold you?"

She then led the way to her friends.

Chapter II.

We shall not inquire what thoughts passed through the mind of Ruy Dias, in consequence of this interview, nor guess at the motives of Quisara in bringing it about; but pass at once to the public reception of the Princess's suitors, which was to take place the next day, and at which it was expected she would give some distinct intimation of her views and feelings, touching the pretensions of those who so earnestly sought her favour.

The hour of audience arrived; and the hall of Quisara's palace was decked for the occasion, in all the barbaric pomp which became her station, as present sovereign of the land; and

the suitors were in attendance, each surrounded by his followers, and each scarcely permitting the place in which they met to prevent him from flinging a personal defiance in the face of the others, but that all knew this would be the surest way to lose the favour of the Princess.

Besides the three suitors and their followers, the hall was open to all those natives and strangers in the island, whose station entitled them to visit the Court. It was thronged, therefore, in every part; and among other foreigners who were present through curiosity, there was a young and noble Portuguese, named Armusia, who was newly arrived on the island, and having already heard much of Quisara's beauty, as well as of her extraordinary prudence and wisdom in administering the government during her brother's enforced absence, had sought this opportunity of seeing, and if occasion served, of paying his respects to her.

At length Quisara entered the hall, accom-

panied by a female relative who was scarcely ever absent from her, and followed by Ruy Dias,—who, in virtue of his station in the island, had been permitted to join her train in the antichamber.

It is not necessary to our purpose to describe the effects which Quisara's presence produced upon the various groups forming the splendid throng which filled the hall of audience. It is sufficient to say that (as the custom was) all greeted her entrance with shouts of admiring applause — all, except the young stranger, Armusia, who seemed struck into a wondering and speechless joy at the sight of her, and who for some time stood gazing silently upon her, as if unconscious of the presence of any other object, and unweeting even of that, except through the medium of his sight alone.

When Quisara had seated herself at the upper end of the hall, and the loud greetings caused by her entrance had subsided, a silence seemed gradually to steal over the whole

assembly, till presently all was hushed into a dead stillness: for the object of the meeting was known to all, and all waited in the most eager anxiety for its result.

At length Quisara rose from her seat; the silence became more breathless than before, and after a brief pause, she spoke as follows:—

"The Princes who honour Quisara by coming hither as her suitors, are now to learn which among them, if either, may look to win her. —She knows not this herself—only how she may be won. Let, then, those who would win her, listen. It is as a Princess of this island that Quisara is wooed; and as a Princess of this island she must be won,—not as a mere woman. She neither knows nor seeks to distinguish between the merits of her suitors; and she thinks not of her own. She lives but in the love of her brother's people; and those who would serve and win her must do it through them. She asks not for duty or observance: these she has from those who owe it to her, and

to whom she owes and pays hers in return. What she asks is this—that he whom she is to love and wed be one, nobler than herself, in the power of *doing* what she can only *think*—one who can serve the people of this land as she can only will and wish to serve them : else, why should she wed? Let those who hear her, think of this, and of a deed that answers to it: and he who does that deed, whether a suitor now, or not, is Quisara's lord and husband, if he so wills."

She paused for a moment; but all remaining intently silent, she continued:—

"It must be a deed, wise, bold, difficult, dangerous, and nobly performed. Does no one present think of such a deed?"

She paused again, and cast her eyes loftily round the hall, till at length they rested upon Ruy Dias, who was listening with deep attention to her words. But she saw in him no signs by which she could judge that his thoughts were occupied as she would have had them;

and as she saw this, her lip fell for an instant. In the next, her face resumed its lofty composure, and she stood silent, as if waiting for a reply to her words.

None came; only a busy whisper ran through the hall,—which was presently hushed again, as if asking for her further speech. She paused for a few moments longer, and then resumed:—

"I would fain have had my wishes felt, rather than have spoken them. I thought that those who loved us could look into our hearts."

As she said this, she half-turned, as if unconsciously, to the spot where Ruy Dias was standing; but she did not look at him.

"Since it is not so," she continued, "briefly let me say, the deed that can alone win Quisara, is the redeeming from the bonds of yonder crafty and bad man, her royal brother —him who should sit where she does now— the beloved Prince of this beautiful land, but

in whose absence all its beauties speak but of grief. This were an action worthy to win the sister of that Prince; and he who does it may claim her for his bride. She will be his alone. I swear it by my royal name and word."

So saying, Quisara immediately turned, and was about to quit the hall; but her retirement was arrested by the Chief of Ternata, who approached her with a show of great humility and respect, and addressed her thus:—

"I take you at your royal word, Lady. I, and none but I, can perform the deed you have enjoined: and I *will* perform it, on the condition you have named. Be my bride—and your royal brother is free, and is my friend."

Quisara looked upon him, as he spoke, with all the scorn that her soft features could carry; and when he paused, she replied—

"I said, the deed that was to win me must be one, bold, dangerous, difficult, and nobly performed. Can such a deed come from such a source? And if it could, were *this* such a

deed in *you?* I scorn you and your proffer—as my noble brother would scorn me, if I were to buy his freedom at such a price. Go—quit this island instantly—while you are safe."

And she once more turned, and quitted the hall,—not without looking stedfastly at Ruy Dias as she passed him, and feeling a sadness come over her, as doubts grew within her, no less as to the strength of his love, than of those qualities and sentiments from which she had hoped that it sprang.

The hall was presently cleared, and the suitors and others departed, without giving any open indications, by their words or conduct, as to how their hopes and views were affected by the result of the audience:—only it was observed that an earnest conference took place between the young stranger, Armusia, and his friends,—who lingered in the hall for a few minutes after the rest, and then quitted it suddenly, with looks of eager meaning upon their faces. It was observed, too, that in the course

of the same day, both they and the Chief of Ternata quitted the island.

Chapter III.

During the next two days Quisara did not quit her private apartments. But solitude brought with it different feelings and images from those it had of late been wont to engender. While she was communing with the world, all her thoughts were given to the unhappy condition of her brother, and to the welfare of those whom his captivity had placed beneath her rule. But when she retired from the busy scenes into which her daily duties carried her, it had of late seemed like retiring into the sanctuary of her own heart, to worship there the beautiful image of valour and virtue which her fond imagination had set up, under the noble form of Ruy Dias—whom she had long observed to be immeasurably superior, in knowledge, at

least, and in its attendant graces and refinements, to the comparatively uncultivated natives of her own island; and she had begun to look upon him as a being sent by Heaven to fill the void, and satisfy the yearnings, that she had long felt within her heart. When she found, too, (as she thought,) that he loved her, these feelings towards Ruy Dias had increased, from her no longer thinking it needful to check or controul them; and they had confirmed and hastened her in the project, of trying which of her suitors was most worthy of her, and at the same time gaining an occasion of dismissing the rest;—not doubting for an instant as to *which* among them would first and best prove his title to her favour.

But the result of Quisara's trial had no less perplexed and saddened, than it had surprised her. When, indeed, she had talked vaguely to Ruy Dias, of winning her favour by doing something to deserve it, he had fired at her words, and the first ardour of youthful blood could not

have shown itself more eager to do her bidding. But when those words pointed to a definite end, and there was little to imagine and much to perform, his ardour seemed to cool, and his heart to close up, like a night-flower when the light comes to it.

All the native brightness of Quisara's mind, and the untaught wisdom of her heart, could not explain this to her; and she could only attribute it to the weakness of Ruy Dias's love, and lament over the failure of her hopes accordingly. But she lamented only with that sweet composure with which she would have rejoiced had it been otherwise: for her instinctive feeling of what was due to herself had prevented her from yielding up the entire controul over the treasures of her heart, till she was fully assured that she was not casting them away.

As to Ruy Dias himself,—we have said that his love towards Quisara had hitherto remained shut up within his own breast, waiting for some

outward occasion of showing and diffusing itself. But when that occasion arrived, (as it now had,) he began to perceive, for he was a shrewd and clear-sighted man, and could look even into his own heart when anything questionable in its operations impelled him to do so —that the love of early youth, and the love of staid maturity, are as different in their nature as are the complexions, the thoughts, or the hopes of those two periods. That Ruy Dias loved Quisara with a pure and deep-rooted love, became more evident to him the more he examined and questioned his sentiments respecting her. But that he was *able* to question and examine those sentiments, proved to him that the roots of his love were fixed in his reason and his understanding, not in his heart, and that its nourishment was drawn from his imagination, not his blood. In short, his love was essentially contemplative; and when now for the first time called upon to act, it first asserted its true character. The

words of Quisara, at the public audience, at first stirred and warmed Ruy Dias; then elevated and inspired him; and, until they pointed to a definite act, there was, he thought, nothing that he could not perform, to prove the strength of his love for her. But when one thing, and one alone, was to be done, then his calculating reason came into play, and he began to *think* upon the proposed task, and to balance against each other, the means of doing it, and the opposing difficulties; and his love stood aloof, and took no part in the conference.

Such is not the love that lifts men into heroes; and they who possess it are happy if, when opposed, it does not lead them into crime. We shall presently see what it did for Ruy Dias.

On the evening of the second day after that on which Quisara had given public audience to her suitors, Ruy Dias solicited an interview with her: for he had grown alarmed at her unusual seclusion; and, moreover, having seriously con-

sidered of the project for the release of the King, he wished to communicate with her upon it.

She received him with a clouded brow, closed lips, and an air of sad yet tender reproach; all of which denoted what had been the cause of her seclusion, and what the kind of thoughts by which it had been occupied. Still she treated him with her usual frankness, and with no sign of anger.

"This is not as I thought or hoped, Ruy Dias," said she. "I thought it was the noble nature of you Portugals to *do*—not *talk of* doing."

"Dearest Lady," exclaimed he, interrupting her;—but she stayed his words with a motion of her head and hand.

"Nay," continued she, "when you first told me of your love, (led so to do by me—I confess it,) your words were made of fire. It was this that moved me to set the price I did upon the rescue of my royal brother: for I knew that,

of those who sought me, except yourself, none had the courage even to essay the act, much less the prudence and the wisdom to achieve it. I thought your words were deeds, only not yet done. I was deceived, Ruy Dias: I find you cold and cautious. Eager to *have* my love, I doubt not, but slow to win it. Nay," continued she, seeing he was about to speak—"I do not say that you have lost it—but——"

"Lady," said he, roused by these last words, so as to be no longer able to restrain himself from interrupting her—"Lady—I have been to blame; your reproaches—for they are just—strike shame into me. Something shall be done, and speedily—at least attempted. But we must be cautious—for the act is perilous—and ——"

"Prudence is good, Ruy Dias," interrupted Quisara, "but when the act is great and pressing, beware of it. It was not prudence, but an insolent boldness, that *lost* us my royal

brother. Think whether the same might not regain him."

At this instant a great shout was heard, as if coming from the sea-shore; and as Quisara and Ruy Dias paused to listen, it seemed to approach, and gather strength as it neared them. They listened anxiously—they scarce knew why—as if they had an instinctive feeling that both were deeply interested in the cause. Still it kept rolling onward towards the spot where they stood, and gathering an awful strength as it drew nigh.

The sound was a joyful one; and it seemed to come from the collected voices of the whole people.

At length an attendant burst unceremoniously into the apartment where Quisara and Ruy Dias were conferring, and exclaimed, in breathless haste,—

"The King!—The King, madam, is returned!"

These words fixed Ruy Dias motionless to the spot where he was standing.

Their effect on Quisara was different. At first, a rush of joy came upon her heart, and with uplifted arms, eager lips, and eyes sparkling with a new fire, she was rushing forward, forgetful of everything but the unexpected joy that awaited her, in the sight of her beloved brother. But suddenly she stopped—a look of sadness passed into her face,—the moment before beaming with delight; and she turned to Ruy Dias:——

"This should have been your work, Ruy Dias," said she,—"but *prudence*—"

Then checking herself, she seemed to will back into her face and heart the sparkling joy that a momentary thought had driven away.

"Come!" said she, "let us not cloud the brightness of these happy tidings, by thinking in what they *might* have been happier. Come!" And she hastily quitted the apartment,—beckoning Ruy Dias to follow her.

It should now be related, briefly, (for the details are not material to the object of our story,) that the young Armusia, who has been described as so struck with silent wonder and admiration at the first sight of Quisara, no sooner heard the announcement of her determination, as to the price which could alone purchase her love, than he instantly bethought him of how the act might at least be attempted; and, with all the burning ardour of youth, and the promptitude inspired by a new passion, he had already taken measures towards its accomplishment, while the avowed suitors of Quisara were pondering upon its impossibility.

By his eloquent representations, added to the love that they all bore him, Armusia engaged three of his companions to assist him in his enterprise. They immediately, within an hour or two of the audience, left the island in a small boat they provided for the purpose; reached Ternata the same day; and

established themselves in a storehouse adjoining to the prison where the King was confined. They made arrangements and preparations, in the course of the next day, for the blow which they proposed to strike; and before day-break on the following morning the storehouse and prison were in flames—the doors of the latter were burst open—the guards surprised and overcome—the King rescued, and on the sea in their little boat;—and behold him now, approaching triumphantly to his own palace gates, amid the joyful shouts of his people; but hearing and heeding them less than the still deep voice that was singing grateful hymns within his heart, to the noble deliverer who walked modestly and thoughtfully by his side!

The multitude whose shouts had called Quisara forth from her conference with Ruy Dias, reached the palace gates as she was about to leave them, and on the threshold of their own dwelling the brother and sister once more met, and were pressed in each other's arms.

When the King had embraced his sister, and vented his first feelings of joy at the sight of her, he turned towards Armusia, (who had retired to some distance at the approach of Quisara,) and motioning him forward, took him by the hand, and presented him to her.

"You, no doubt, know this noble youth," said he, "to whose skill and valour we owe it that we now see each other—that your brother once more rejoices in his freedom—that this people again receive and hail their King. Greet him, my sweet sister, as his great act deserves."

During these words Quisara's heart sank within her; for in her anxious joy at the King's freedom, she had not for an instant thought of how or by whom it had been accomplished; except that a vague feeling had passed through her mind, that no doubt it had been brought about by some plan or proceeding of her brother himself: for she knew that, except the Chief of Ternata, no one of her

avowed suitors had left the island since she had given audience to them. But now, indistinct fears came upon her. She thought of the promise she had publicly made at the audience; of him from her confidence in whose love she had made it; and looking round hurriedly, as if in search of some one, and not finding what she sought, she flung herself once more upon the neck of her brother; and almost without noticing the humble yet ardent looks of Armusia, she seemed to take refuge, in a new burst of joy, from the contending feelings that assailed her.

END OF VOLUME I.

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